

# SPEECH MONOGRAPHS

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# SPEECH MONOGRAPHS

VOLUME XXII—No. 5

NOVEMBER, 1955

## QUEEN OF SPASMS: THE ACTING OF CLARA MORRIS

GARFF B. WILSON

*University of California, Berkeley*

In the first volume of her reminiscences, Clara Morris asks the question: "What could you do to make yourself cry seven times a week for nine or ten months of the year?" And then she wonders: ". . . did I ever do anything else? For it seems to me I have cried steadily through all the years of my dramatic life. Tears gentle, regretful; tears petulant, fretful; tears stormy, passionate; tears slow, despairing; with a light patter, now and then, of my own particular brand . . ."<sup>1</sup> It was precisely this ability—to weep all kinds of tears at every single performance for season after season—that distinguished the acting of Clara Morris. She was the mistress of the *Ductus Lachrimalis*, the Queen of the Streaming Eye. She wept her way to stardom; she maintained her position by weeping; and her unending rain of tears earned her the large fortune which, dissipated too soon, brought forth new showers of tears from both the actress and her sentimental public. The kingdom of Robert Bruce is said to have been founded on a spider's web; the dramatic empire of Clara Morris was founded on a drop of water.

Clara Morris began her career in 1862, at the age of fourteen, as a ballet girl for John Ellsler, manager of the Cleve-

land Academy of Music. The only theatrical instruction she ever received was a lesson in make-up, given her by an older actress of the company. The rest of her knowledge was gained by observation, and by playing every kind of part, large or small, comic or tragic, in Mr. Ellsler's company. While still in her teens she acted Gertrude to the Hamlet of Edwin Booth, and Emilia to the Othello of E. L. Davenport. Her apprenticeship lasted seven years, ending when she became the leading lady at Woods Theatre in Cincinnati. But she remained in Cincinnati for only one season. The encouragement she received from critics and friends led her to apply for a position in Augustin Daly's New York company. Daly engaged her, at a nominal salary, with the idea of making a comedienne of her. "Your forte is comedy, pure and simple," he told her after studying her face.<sup>2</sup> But Clara Morris never acted comedy for Mr. Daly. When Agnes Ethel refused the feminine lead in a play called *Man and Wife*, Miss Morris was given the part. It was an emotional role in a domestic drama, and the young actress from the West played it with triumphant success. Henceforth, she became a specialist in domestic emotionalism. Parts in comedy or high tragedy were abandoned for the

<sup>1</sup> Clara Morris, *Life on the Stage* (New York, 1901), pp. 317, 141.

<sup>2</sup> Morris, *Life*, p. 257.

tearful heroines of modern French melodrama. She played so many of these roles, and she identified herself so completely with them that when, later on, she tried to extend her range and play Lady Macbeth or Evadne or Jane Shore, she was criticized for converting these heroines into "incongruous women of the present day."

Typical of the plays with which Miss Morris became identified, and in which she scored her triumphs were *L'Article 47*, *Alixé*, and *Miss Multon*, all adaptations from the French. In the first of these the heroine, Cora, is the mistress of a young Frenchman who shoots her in a fit of passion, leaving a hideous scar on her face. He then marries a "pure" woman and Cora devotes her life to winning him back and plotting revenge. *Alixé* is the spectacle of a young girl tortured almost to madness by the loss of her lover, then rent with double anguish by the discovery that her rival is her own sister, and finally driven to suicide by the discovery of her mother's past dishonor. *Miss Multon* is a Frenchified version of *East Lynn*, in which a wife abandons her children for a lover, repents, returns in disguise to become their governess, is finally discovered, and dies with the children sobbing around her.

In such plays as these, Miss Morris won the title of "Queen of Spasms." She was always the "soiled dove," the woman who dies a heart-rending death after several acts of sinning and suffering. In her ability to portray the required emotions, Miss Morris was unmatched. At the height of her career no actress could equal her flashes of scorn, her overpowering grief, or her tumultuous passion. At times she was feverish and cat-like; at other times she was a human volcano "lighting up the stage with blazes of emotional lightning." But more success-

ful yet was her portrayal of the inner struggles which manifest themselves in the quivering lip, the heaving breast, and especially the streaming eye. Miss Morris's ability to manufacture stage tears was phenomenal. She could weep any time the dramatic situation demanded it. The tears were real, too, not simulated by trickery or illusion. They flowed whenever the actress turned her thoughts to sad or pitiable things. She tells us that it was necessary for her to feel actual sadness before she could weep, but apparently she was able to summon a doleful mood quite easily. If the role she played had lost its sadness through frequent repetition, she aroused her emotions by imagining her own death, or by recalling a tragic book, poem, or incident from real life. "Thus," she tells us, "in *Alixé* it was not for my lost lover that I oftenest wept such racing tears, but for poor old *Tennessee's Partner* as he buried his worthless dead. . . . While in *Camille* many and many a night her tears fell fast over the memory of a certain mother's face as she told me of . . . returning from the burial of her only child. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

The sympathetic appeal of Miss Morris's tears was enhanced by the personal situation of the actress. When she was small she had met with an accident which injured her spine and caused her considerable suffering for the rest of her life. In her public writings she also complained of her "chronic neuralgia" and the malaria which she never "got out of her bones." These ailments, and Miss Morris's courageous endurance of them, were well advertised to the public. Audiences knew she carried bottles of medicine with her on the stage and had a physician in attendance to minister to her between acts, so when the actress appeared to suffer torments as *Alixé* or

<sup>3</sup> Morris, *Life*, pp. 316-317.



Miss Multon or Camille, the audience suspected that she actually was feeling great pain and enduring it for the sake of her performance. Miss Morris encouraged this belief by taking prolonged intermissions between each act of her plays. Sometimes these waits were as long as forty-five or fifty minutes each, and a performance lasted far, far into the night. During these waits, audiences imagined that the brave Miss Morris was backstage battling for strength enough to continue her acting. It is true that sometimes she was ill and was forced to rest and take treatment between the acts, but very often—according to Vivia Ogden, a fellow actress—she simply refused to hurry and dawdled the time away while the audiences waited with pity and admiration growing in their hearts.<sup>4</sup>

Even without such devices, Miss Morris could make an audience weep and suffer with her. Spectators experienced an immediate and strong empathic response to her acting; they identified themselves personally with her struggles. Few actresses have ever possessed so much personal magnetism. Sometimes the spell which Miss Morris exerted amounted to actual hypnotism. For example, in the mad scene of *L'Article 47* the actress would seat herself on a chair, put her elbow on her knee and play her scene gazing straight into the eyes of her spectators—with the result that invariably women in the audience would faint or become hysterical. Even the actors and actresses playing with Miss Morris felt the potency of her spell. The man who played Gaston to her Camille usually was weeping when he left the stage. Louis James, who played with her in *Miss Multon* was so overcome by her mimic agony that he couldn't speak

until she prompted him. Vivia Ogden, acting in the same play, burst into tears and could hardly control herself enough to continue the scene.<sup>5</sup>

Almost everyone felt the unusual magnetism of the Morris personality, but no one could explain it. Most of the critics agreed that her appeal defied analysis. In 1885, for example, "Nym Crinkle" wrote: "I give it up. Critics have wrestled with that condition in and out of season—how she can play upon all sensibilities and sweep as with supernatural fingers the whole gamut of emotions passes critical knowledge."<sup>6</sup>

In stimulating the emotions of her spectators Miss Morris was aided by a keen sensitivity to their moods and reactions. She detected the feelings of an audience and she played upon their feelings as a musician plays upon his instrument. In her *Life on the Stage* she declares: ". . . I possessed that curious sixth sense of the born actress and as a doctor with the aid of his stethoscope can hear sounds of grim warning or of kindly promise . . . so an actress with that stethoscopic sixth sense, detects even the forming emotions of her audience, feeling incipient dissatisfaction before it becomes open disapproval, or thrilling at the intense silence that ever precedes a burst of approbation."<sup>7</sup>

Like Matilda Heron, Clara Morris practiced a naturalistic type of acting. Her scar in *L'Article 47* was copied from a hideous disfigurement she saw on a woman who sat opposite her in a street car. Her simulation of death by heart disease in *Miss Multon* was copied from

<sup>5</sup> According to an anecdote, Robinson Locke Collection, Scrapbook 351, New York Public Library, Sarah Bernhardt once attended a performance of Miss Morris in *Camille*. For a long time the French actress was uninterested, but at a certain point in the play she sat up and exclaimed: "Mon dieu! that woman is not acting, she is suffering."

<sup>6</sup> New York *World*, Sept. 25, 1885.

<sup>7</sup> Morris, *Life*, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> Despite her frail health, Miss Morris lived to the respectable age of 77.

the actual horrors she watched when a physician friend of hers paid a sick patient to run up a long flight of stairs so that the actress could observe the actual symptoms of *angina pectoris*. Incidentally, Miss Morris reproduced these symptoms so realistically in her performance that she alarmed several medical men who sat in the audience.

Miss Morris rendered other death scenes with equal realism. Her acting in *Camille* was criticised for including too many revolting details. The poisoning scene in *The Sphinx*, another play adapted from the French, was described by a contemporary critic as follows: "... anything more ghastly, terrible, and realistic than her death scene has not for a long time been seen upon the stage. . . . A visible shudder went through the audience, and horror was depicted upon every face. Mingled with this was a sensation of disgust. It is evident, however, that this scene is to prove the sensation here, as it was in Paris, that will crowd the theatre."<sup>8</sup>

Clara Morris's unique power to make the spectators feel the womanly emotions she displayed was her supreme dramatic endowment, and it covered a multitude of deficiencies. She did not have a particularly beautiful face or graceful figure. In her middle years she was sometimes described as being stout and ugly. Her voice was ordinary and her elocution was faulty. She was frequently criticised

for her nasal twang and her barbarous pronunciations. *The Spirit of the Times*, on December 18, 1880, went so far as to suggest that if she were planning to act in London she had only one chance of success. "Let her be advertized as an Indian star who speaks Choctaw, while the rest of the company speaks English . . . and the novelty may be a sensation."

Miss Morris was crude in her stage technique, too. She had many irritating mannerisms; her gestures were monotonous and her movements were often careless and awkward. And yet she triumphed. In spite of all her sins and deficiencies, in spite of the melodramatic claptrap in her plays, she mesmerized both the public and the critics. She gave them a thrill. She made them shudder and weep, and this power was enough to win her a large and devoted following.

It is pretty clear that Miss Morris's acting was instinctive and intuitive. A few critics especially in her early years, claimed that she was a careful artist who prepared her effects and exercised "the art that conceals art," but the evidence is against this point of view. We know that she never acted in rehearsals. "Only foreigners do that," she said contemptuously. Before each new play, Augustin Daly, her director, was in terrible suspense not knowing what she would do in performance. Often he begged her to give him some inkling of the way she planned to play a scene, but she always said it was impossible for her to act without an audience. In preparing the role of Cora in *L'Article 47*, Miss Morris tells us that she did not know how she was going to act the part until the night before the opening. After the final rehearsal, she was so worried that she retired to her own room, locked herself in, and spent several hours devising a walk and a crouch for Cora choosing a certain tone of voice, and determining where

<sup>8</sup> From an unidentified review in the Robinson Locke Collection, Scrapbook 351, concerning the premier of Octave Feuillet's *The Sphinx*, done at the Union Square Theatre, Sept. 21, 1874. The same scene was described in less complimentary fashion by the critic of the *New York Mail* who wrote Sept. 22, 1874: "... the last convulsions of death are simulated on the stage. Miss Morris chews soap, turns the whites of her eyes up and the corners of her mouth down, smears white powder and red paint over her cheeks and chin, angles her wrists and stiffens her back. Such is the pleasing spectacle presented to a horrified audience as the final tableau of this moral drama. . . ."

her climaxes should come.<sup>9</sup> With this last minute preparation, she was ready to act the part on the following day. Such a confession does not suggest careful artistry but rather an habitual reliance upon inspiration, an impression which is confirmed by the way her performances varied according to her moods and impulses.

One would expect that an actress who wept real tears and who, according to her own testimony, felt every emotion she portrayed, would have little control of herself while she was in the grip of these passions. Evidently this was not the case with Clara Morris. Her head was cool even when her heart seemed to be breaking. While she was acting she maintained a particular state of mind which she once described: "There are, when I am on the stage, three separate currents of thought in my mind; one in which I am keenly alive to Clara Morris, to all details of the play, to the other actors and how they act and to the audience; another, about the play and the character I represent; and, finally, the thought that really gives me the stimulus for acting. . . . As to really losing oneself in a part, that will not do: it is worse to be too sympathetic than to have too much art. I must cry in my emotional *roles* and feel enough to cry, but I must not allow myself to be so affected as to mumble words, to redden my nose, or to become hysterical."<sup>10</sup>

Evidently Miss Morris maintained a remarkably cool head even in her most impassioned scenes. When Louis James was overcome by her agony in *Miss Multon* and couldn't force himself to speak, the actress—in the midst of her tears—muttered, "I say, what ails you. . . . Are

you dumb?"<sup>11</sup> When Miss Morris and one of the child actors were performing a tearful scene in *Miss Multon*, the actress let the child weep for a while, then she leaned over, "her face strained with tears, and agony in every line of it" and murmured: "Shut up now, and give me a show."<sup>12</sup> Often in a tense scene when the audience was dissolved in tears, Miss Morris would turn upstage and whisper something so spontaneous and witty that it was almost impossible for her fellow actors to keep a straight face. One of Miss Morris's hostile critics relates that in *Alixé* during the best scene with her mother, Miss Morris, as Alixé, "sawed one arm across the other as a sign to the leader of the orchestra to start the music, and during one of her mother's most impassioned appeals, she walked to the wings and gave an order off stage." The critic adds the horrified comment, "Fancy Alixé directing a fiddler and chatting with a stage-carpenter during one of the climaxes of her sufferings."<sup>13</sup>

The kind of acting practiced by Clara Morris is not an isolated phenomenon in the history of American acting. Rather, it represents an intensification of a style which was seen before her heyday and has certainly been observed many times since. Clara Morris epitomized the untutored, naturalistic school, which depended for its effect on raw emotional display and personal magnetism and which neglected or eschewed the discipline of study and technique. Among the prominent women of the American stage, preceding and following Clara Morris, who succeeded in this naturalistic-emotional school were Anna Cora Mowatt, Laura Keane, Matilda Heron,

<sup>9</sup> Morris, *Life*, p. 340.

<sup>10</sup> Brander Matthews and Laurence Hutton, *Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and the United States—The Present Time* (New York, 1886), p. 224.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis Strang, *Players and Plays of the Last Quarter Century* (Boston, 1902), II, 237.

<sup>12</sup> Related by Vivia Ogden in *Theatre Magazine*, June, 1902.

<sup>13</sup> New York *Spirit of the Times*, Nov. 6, 1880.

and Mrs. Leslie Carter. The careers of all these women clearly reveal their dependence on Clara Morris's brand of emotional realism. Mrs. Mowatt, for example, made a successful debut, without any previous stage experience and with only three weeks of training, in the emotional role of Pauline in *The Lady of Lyons*, and her success was so great that for nine years she continued playing such leading parts as Mrs. Haller, Katherine, Julia, and Juliet. Edgar Allan Poe wrote that Mrs. Mowatt's chief distinction as an actress was her ability "effectively and unimpededly" to "lay bare to the audience the movements of her own passionate heart."<sup>14</sup> Laura Keane had far more training and experience than Mrs. Mowatt, but at the peak of her career she limited herself to plays which William Winter called "ultra-emotional drama of the hydrostatic order,"<sup>15</sup> and she succeeded in these plays by means of personal charm and emotional display. Matilda Heron, whose one great success was her acting in *Camille*, triumphed in that role through her animal vitality and wildness of passion, displaying, according to William Winter, "a remarkable example of elemental power."<sup>16</sup> Mrs. Leslie Carter is another and later example of the actress who, like Clara Morris, relied on emotional exhibitionism for her success. One need only read the reviews of her plays to realize that whenever she was able to throw herself into a state of semi-hysteria she stirred and titillated her audiences, but when the mood escaped her, she failed to make an impression.

Clara Morris, then, represents a clearly recognizable school in American ac-

ting—a school which has produced some outstandingly successful performers, but a school which has strict limitations. These limitations seem eventually to overtake every practitioner of the school, for when the springs of their personal charm and emotional output dry up, they are left with few resources and their careers decline. This sequence of events is exactly what happened to Clara Morris and was, undoubtedly, the main reason for her failure in later life.

Another reason for her decline was the change in the nature of dramatic literature at the end of the 19th century and the subsequent shift in public taste. After 1890, the modern problem plays of Henrik Ibsen began to receive a hearing, with the result that the false emotionalism of French domestic melodrama was clearly revealed. In the United States, Minnie Maddern Fiske became the leading exponent of the work of the Norwegian dramatist, and she hastened the decline of Clara Morris's style of acting by presenting Ibsen's plays in a simple style based upon psychological truthfulness and freedom from theatrical trickery. Mrs. Fiske demanded that the intellect of an actor control his emotions and direct both his conception and his performance. Clara Morris represented the triumph of emotions over mind; Mrs. Fiske addressed the minds of her spectators before she tried to touch their hearts. It was Mrs. Fiske's kind of acting, in plays inspired by the examples of Ibsen and Chekov, together with new ideas of dramaturgy and stagecraft, which made the emotional melodramas of Clara Morris's repertory and her method of presenting them seem tawdry and old fashioned. As the critic of the *Boston Courier* said in his review of November 5, 1893, "Miss Morris's methods begin to seem a little aloof from the spirit of the age and appear over-

<sup>14</sup> *The Broadway Journal*, July 19, 1845, in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, Virginia Ed. (New York, 1902), XII, 187.

<sup>15</sup> William Winter, *Vagrant Memories* (New York, 1915), p. 57.

<sup>16</sup> William Winter, *New York Tribune*, March 12, 1877.



weighted with obvious agony and determined effort to wring the beholder's heart. . . ." This kind of criticism increased over the next few years.

As we have seen, Clara Morris enjoyed an immense popularity during the early part of her career. The faultiness of her stage technique was forgotten in the hypnotic spell she was able to cast through her opulent display of womanly emotions. But, as she grew older and stouter and failed to develop in versatility or artistry, and as popular taste swung to the Ibsen-type drama, the critics began to ridicule her methods in the fashion of the Boston writer quoted above. In the 1880's she was billed as "America's Greatest Living Actress." By 1902 the newspapers referred to her as "America's once famous actress." In 1876, her performance in *Miss Multon* received the following review in the *Spirit of the Times*: "Her great intensity was astonishingly effective, her pathos genuine and unaffected, and throughout she held her audience, so to speak, in the palm of her hand. . . . Her acting was superb. . . . Before such a rare manifestation of genius, criticism is perforce silent. Can we give greater praise? We have no fault to find. Not one blemish is to be discovered even by the most critical eye. . . ." <sup>17</sup> By 1888 the *Spirit of the Times* had lost its breathless admiration and reviewed Miss Morris's *Renee de Moray* as follows: "She cries and makes her audience cry; she has long waits between the acts and makes her audience wait, she is the same Clara Morris and attracts the same admirers of stage hysteria and disease. It is as impossible to improve her by criticism as to reform the morphia habit by sensible advice. We can only wonder and

pity and pass on."<sup>18</sup> And finally, the ultimate damnation was uttered in 1902 by Alan Dale who, after listening to a lecture by Clara Morris, wrote: "I not only found no symptoms of greatness, but though I tried hard, persistently, strenuously, I could not discover any one single peg upon which to hang the barren possibility of one solitary great moment."<sup>19</sup>

Ill health and waning popularity forced Miss Morris to retire from regular stage appearances in the 1890's. For several years thereafter she was seen occasionally in vaudeville and revivals, and kept very much in the public eye by her lecture tours and her writing. Three volumes of stage reminiscences came from her pen, and she was a regular contributor to the Sunday supplements with articles on such subjects as "Temptations of the Stage," "Why Men Don't Go to Church," and "If I Were A Girl Again." In 1903, 1909, and again in 1911, she received wide publicity because, according to the newspapers, the mortgage on her home was about to be foreclosed while the old actress was lying inside at death's door. Each time Miss Morris's health revived, and each time the actors of New York came to her rescue with a splendid benefit. Miss Morris finally did lose her old home and went to live with relatives, but she did not die until 1925.

Probably the fairest estimate of the acting of this unusual woman can be found in an essay by J. R. Towse, long-time critic of the New York *Evening Post*. In reviewing her career, Mr. Towse says:

"It is by no means easy to define her place in any coldly critical category. She was, first and last, a natural born actress. If judged by her

<sup>18</sup> New York *Spirit of the Times*, April 7, 1888.

<sup>19</sup> Alan Dale, "Why the Ex-Tragedienne Should Be Muzzled," New York *American*, April 27, 1902.

<sup>17</sup> New York *Spirit of the Times*, Nov. 25, 1876.



artistic equipment only, she could not establish a claim to any very high place in the ranks of her contemporaries. She was far behind many of them in artistic cunning, but she distanced all of them in flashes of convincing realism and in poignancy of natural emotion. She was often barely respectable as an elocutionist, she was habitually crude, and occasionally unrefined in pose, gesture, and utterance; she had distressful mannerisms, she could not or did not attempt to modify or disguise her individual personality, her range was limited—she could not soar into the upper regions of tragedy—but nevertheless, she showed, especially in emotional crises, a strong grasp of diversified

characters within her own boundries and illuminated them, at intervals with such a blaze of vivid truthfulness that, for the moment, she seemed to be perfectly identified with them. . . . As she never really succeeded, or came very near to success, in any great part, she can never be called a great actress. . . . But she was great as a realist in the exaggerated, false, or morbid emotionalism of the current French plays of her period, and displayed high intelligence in a considerable range of English drama."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> J. R. Towse, *Sixty Years of the Theatre* (New York and London, 1916), pp. 150-151.

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## THE MIRTH EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC ADDRESS\*

WILMA H. GRIMES  
*University of Washington*

IN the light of our analysis of the mirth experience, we can now suggest, first, what technical conditions must be met by the speaker who employs such forms of humor as the pun, the anecdote, and the pithy phrase or sentence ordinarily designated as a witticism. Second, we can see clearly that the attitudes and feeling of an audience must provide an appropriate climate if humor is to work at all; in fact, if the climate is not "right," a speaker may meet all the technical requirements of the humorous experience and fail to get his smile. Finally, we can advise the speaker to look critically at the traditional rhetorical values of humor, deciding for each speech and for each instance of humor whether it can be used to advantage. In public address, possibly humor may be less useful, a more dangerous—or at least a more delicate—weapon of persuasion, than tradition has led us to believe.

### I. THE PUN, THE ANECDOTE, AND THE WITTICISM

Since it is impractical to analyze all the kinds of humor which a speaker might choose, I shall limit this analysis to three typical kinds of humor commonly found in those speeches which contain passages intended to arouse mirth: the pun, the anecdote, and the witticism. If these evoke humor, they must (1) develop tension early in the movement of the event; (2) contain a change of direction so sudden as to con-

stitute a "shock;" (3) yield "insight" creating surprise, or cessation of activity; (4) result in relief, or release of tension, in the form of mirth, i.e., laughter or smiling. There is a certain degree of tension or expectancy in every event and in every statement, no matter how factual they may be. I leave the breakfast table *expecting* to start my car and drive to work; the event comes to a close when I unlock my office or class-room door. Even though such an event is neither momentous nor complex, there is proportionate relief when it reaches its close. I listen to a friend state his intentions regarding the coming weekend; my expectation ends with a measure of relief when he finishes with, "I'll return at midnight Sunday." Events and statements become more interesting when they contain a change of direction or surprise. As we have pointed out, tension, change or surprise may each occur without leading to mirth. It is only when all three elements are present—and are present in this order and no other—in a situation or statement that insight and relief can be followed by the mirth-response.

The elements of tension, "shock," and surprise are present in the pun and normally bring relief. Suppose the following pun occurs in a friendly conversation:

May—Say, did you hear of the kidnapping case in our block?

Fay—Good heavens, no! Who was it?

May—Mrs. Jones's little boy. She missed Danny yesterday afternoon, and after looking everywhere, she found the kid napping in his crib.

May's opening question starts the ten-

\*See also Wilma H. Grimes, "A Theory of Humor for Public Address: the Mirth Experience," *Speech Monographs*, 22 (1955), 217-226.

sion, perhaps slight, and lays the foundation for suspense. Fay's response expresses concern, and takes the thought in a normal direction, with her question serving to heighten tension and expectancy. May's "Mrs. Jones's little boy" could complete the thought and resolve expectancy, but it doesn't, for she quickly supplies details which move

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Expectancy, direction,  
and tension created

Tension increased by  
change in direction  
(contrast)

Reversal of direction;  
shock and surprise,  
"insight" and laughter

New direction, swiftly  
established, with  
second reversal, surprise  
and laughter

---

the thought along in a logical (normal) direction. The incongruity, thus carefully prepared for, finally occurs in a flash, with "kid napping in his crib." It is precisely here that direction is changed—indeed reversed—and with change in direction come shock and surprise. Then with the full realization that tragedy is not entailed, that all is incongruous, comes the feeling of relief.

Let us look at the pun as used in a speech by Adlai Stevenson at a dinner of the Colorado Volunteers for Stevenson, in Denver, on September 5, 1952:

When this visit to Denver was arranged for me I had thought to find here a bustling and hostile campaign headquarters. But evidently all is quiet in Denver. The tents have been folded

and the captains and the kings have departed.

I am informed, if not very reliably, that with both discordant elements of the Republican party here in Denver, suddenly someone realized that Denver is very close to the Great Divide. And I guess they thought it was time for a change before this unhappy symbolism became too apparent.<sup>1</sup>

That the conditions of humor operate here may be indicated thus:

When this visit to Denver was arranged for me I had thought to find here a bustling and hostile campaign headquarters

But evidently all is quiet in Denver. The tents have been folded and the captains and the kings have departed.

I am informed . . . that with both discordant elements of the Republican party here in Denver, suddenly someone realized that

Denver is very close to the Great Divide

And I guess they thought it was time for a change . . .

While the knowledge which the audience had of the Republican schism was good preparation for these puns, additional preparation comes in the first paragraph of the passage. Yet the pun does not hit until the suggestion of dissension in the Republican ranks becomes an outright statement brought to a climax with "The Great Divide." Less preparation is given and needed in the speech for "time for a change," since the Republican slogan was in the air and on the sidewalk.

In another pun of Stevenson's<sup>2</sup> we

<sup>1</sup> *Major Campaign Speeches of Adlai E. Stevenson*, with introd. by the author (New York, 1953), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> In a speech at the Convention of the American Federation of Labor in New York City, Sept. 22, 1952.

again find, in rapid succession, heightening of tension, reversal of direction and shock, surprise, relief and laughter:

You have been transacting your business here for eight days. And I would think it was high time for a little humor. But I fear that there may be some people listening who don't like the light touch, although—well, they don't seem to mind the heavy touch, as long as it is a Republican and not a Democrat. But, gentlemen, there is business before your house and I propose to get right to it, obeying, as far as I can, what seems to be known as the Republican law of gravity.<sup>3</sup>

Expectancy, bringing tension, is openly created in "And I would think it was high time for a little humor." A slight disappointment, teasing, or contrast comes with the casual "I fear that there may be some people listening who don't like the light touch, although—well, they don't seem to mind the heavy touch, as long as it is a Republican and not a Democrat."<sup>4</sup> This teasing serves to increase tension, even more so when disappointment seems sure because of the brisk dismissal of nonsense in, "Gentlemen, there is business before your house and I propose to get right to it. . . ." Reversal of direction is sharp and sudden, bringing surprise, relief because the humor has finally come, and laughter, with "what seems to be known as the Republican law of gravity." Again, Stevenson's humor has the advantage of prior preparation by the voices of the opposition accusing him of too much levity.

We may conclude from these examples that if the pun is to secure its maximum effect, the punster must take special care in presenting it, enhancing expectancy by placing the pun in context so that it is at the peak of a steady

climb in interest and thus counteracting the speed and impact which are the peculiar property of the pun. For skillful increasing of tension not only accentuates the incongruity which is to come, but gives credence and plausibility to the pun. Otherwise, the logically minded listener will not accept the sudden realization of absurdity which is necessary for incongruity. For the pun not only contains a *sudden* incongruity; it is the only humorous form in which two or more elements producing incongruity appear simultaneously. Ordinarily the presentation of an incongruity allows for preparation, since one statement must of necessity follow another. With the pun, one word or phrase contains everything essential to the double meaning. Often the pun is the product of mispronunciations or misspellings which seem strained and artificial. Even when such straining for incongruity is not apparent, people object to the "shock" of the pun for which they have no warning. They feel "silly." They like to feel, after "insight," that they saw it coming, just as they enjoy a murder mystery in which they pick up clues and feel omnipotent along with Sherlock Holmes. So, while a "shock" always occurs in the perception of a pun, and there is bound to be a temporary lull in effort or activity at the step in the movement toward laughter, the laughter is less than in other forms because there has been less tension originally. One could probably show by experiment that the pun brings smiles more often than it brings laughter. Perhaps in a given situation the smile is ample response; yet to insure even this measure of mirth, the speaker needs to employ dramatic preparation, or skillful suggestion, in planning and delivering the pun.

As in the case of the pun, the success

<sup>3</sup> Stevenson, *Major Campaign Speeches*, p. 157.

<sup>4</sup> This play on "light" and "heavy" touch might be intended for a pun; but if so, it is only preparatory for the main one which is to follow.

of an anecdote,<sup>5</sup> depends upon suspense, "shock," and surprise, occurring in rapid succession. Without these three elements, there is no incongruity and no ensuring relief. The following anecdote<sup>6</sup> comprises these three requisites to mirth. Twain introduced it with the declaration that the greatness of the United States rested upon two anecdotes, the first being that of Washington and the hatchet and the second, the one which he proposed to tell concerning the guest of honor:

It is an anecdote of our guest, of the time when he was engaged as a young man with a gentle Hebrew, in the process of skinning the client. The main part in that business is the collection of the bill for services in skinning the man. 'Service' is the term used in that craft for the operation of that kind—diplomatic in its nature.

Choate's—co-respondent—made out a bill for five hundred dollars for his services, so called. But Choate told him he better leave the matter to him, and the next day he collected the bill for the services and handed the Hebrew five thousand dollars, saying, 'That's your half of the loot,' and inducing that memorable response: 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'

Even if we discount the interest among the guests who are gathered to honor Choate, the satire at the expense of the legal profession, and the fame of the speaker, we find that the anecdote has merit. It is skillfully constructed, with tension mounting to "That's your half of the loot," when a new direction sets in with "Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian." In the listener's eagerness to hear how Choate fared in

collecting a higher fee, he has no thought of religious affiliation. Besides the surprise which comes from suddenly learning that Choate has greatly increased the fee, there stirs another thought, a doubt as in the superiority of the Christian. The materialistic way in which Choate won respect for Christianity adds still another feature in the incongruity. Since Choate's "Self"<sup>8</sup> was safe among these friends, laughter followed the triple surprise and corresponding relief of the solution.

Another anecdote, from a speech of Adlai Stevenson, further illustrates the necessity of suspense, "shock," and surprise in the construction of this type of stimulus to mirth. It centers upon the campaign of Stevenson's grandfather for the office of Vice-President:<sup>9</sup>

If you treat me this well, you may never get rid of me—so look out. I have read a lot of stories about the time when my grandfather campaigned in the state of Washington for the Vice Presidency, exactly sixty years ago this month. The big issue, I am told, at that time was whether your majestic mountain was to be named Mount Tacoma or Mount Ranier. Apparently, that was the only subject of interest in Washington at that time. Anyway, the views of Seattle and Tacoma were in violent disagreement and it seems that my adroit grandfather solved this difficulty by giving each audience from the rear platform of his train an eloquent speech about the beauties of the mountain, and then went on to say, 'And I want you to know, all of you good people, that I emphatically agree that this magnificent mountain should be named—' And just then they pulled the whistle on the train and it started with a huff and a puff, and the old man bowed

<sup>5</sup> The type of humor we call a *joke* may or may not be an anecdote. It may be a pun or other witticism. The main distinction between an *anecdote* and a *joke* is that the former is likely to contain more steps in its "plot," thus allowing more time for the initiatory suspense.

<sup>6</sup> From a speech of Mark Twain's given at a dinner in honor of Ambassador Joseph H. Choate at the Lotus Club, Nov. 24, 1901.

<sup>7</sup> *Mark Twain's Speeches*, introd. by Albert Bigelow Paine (New York and London, 1923), pp. 242-243.

<sup>8</sup> See William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York, 1890), I, 291, for the following definition of the self: "In its widest possible sense, however, a man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and his children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and work, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account."

<sup>9</sup> Delivered in Seattle, Wash., at the Civic Ice Arena, Sept. 8, 1952.



to the audience graciously and they cheered ecstatically.<sup>10</sup>

In this gentle anecdote, suspense occurs, reaching its height at "should be named," but the turn in direction is of the "let-down" variety; that is, the opposite tendency is a definite disappointment, as Kant, Spencer, or Eastman would testify. The incongruity consists not in the juxtaposition of a contrary statement, but in the juxtaposition of "nothing." This method of achieving incongruity often appears in witticisms which have no narrative quality, and in any case brings mirth if the peak of tension is sufficient to accentuate the sudden drop.

We have seen that the maker of puns often has to contrive time in order to create sufficient suspense to prepare his listeners for "shock." The teller of anecdotes, because of the appeal which a story has, is able to arouse interest through his material. His success, in fact, depends to a great extent upon his resisting the temptation of over-amplification. In being economical of words and time and not permitting the initial steps to drag, the speaker who uses the anecdote insures surprise upon the perception of incongruity. When managed artistically, an anecdote helps to launch a controversial subject or adds color and enjoyment to a social occasion, especially if it deals with well-known events or popular figures.

The witticism, like the pun, thrives best when tension is built up in the part of the speech immediately preceding it. In fact, the pun itself might be discussed under the head of witticism, except that its distinguishing characteristic of striking all at once, without any time intervening between initial and counter-statement, makes it unique. Truly, almost all witticisms can be classi-

fied as something else. We shall not concern ourselves, however, with these classifications, since our purpose is to look for tension, "shock," surprise, and relief in the patterned structure of the witticism. We may observe these four characteristic components in the following collection of witty phrases, built into a serious oration on the "Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child":

I thank Mother Nature that she has put ingenuity enough in the breast of a child, when attacked by a brutal parent, to throw up a little breast-work in the shape of a lie. When one of your children tells a lie, be honest with him; tell him you have told hundreds of them yourself. Tell him it is not the best way; you have tried it. Tell him as the man did in Maine when his boy left home: 'John, honesty is the best policy; I have tried both.' Just be honest with him. Imagine now, you are about to whip a child five years of age. What is the child to do? Suppose a man, as much larger than you are larger than a child five years old, should come at you with a liberty-pole in his hand, and in a voice of thunder shout, 'Who broke that plate?' There is not a solitary one of you who wouldn't swear you never saw it, or that it was cracked when you found it! Why not be honest with these children? Just imagine a man who deals in stocks putting false rumors afloat! Think of a lawyer beating his own flesh and blood for evading the truth when he makes half his own living that way! Think of a minister punishing his child for not telling all he thinks! Just think of it!<sup>11</sup>

These sudden witticisms springing from context can be examined separately, for each one of the brief sentences supporting Ingersoll's contention that the child is forced to lie in self-defense has its rise to a peak of suspense, its incongruous relation, sudden "insight" and subsequent relief. For example, we expect the man in Maine to stop with "Honesty is the best policy," or at least to add nothing except such advice as "See that you practice it." Instead, he finishes with his surprising turn in

<sup>11</sup> In *Complete Lectures of Colonel R. G. Ingersoll* (Chicago, 1880), p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Stevenson, *Major Campaign Speeches*, p. 83.

direction, "I have tried both." In the last three instances of the passage, Ingersoll adroitly leaves much for the audience to finish. For the lawyer, being one himself, he states the contrast; but for the man dealing in stocks and for the minister, he lets the audience fill in. Yet incongruity is sure, for stated or suggested, the original statement takes a new turn. The incongruity of the whole passage comes from the concept that lying is understandable and even desirable occasionally, in contrast with the usual teaching that lying is always wrong. Earlier in the speech Ingersoll has led the audience to accept this unconventional concept, first, by laughing at the incongruity between adult behavior and adult instructions to children, then by describing cruel parents, and finally, by describing tender parents. Thus, the paragraph is itself a peak in the progressive development of a serious idea. At the end, when Ingersoll avoids naming the minister's deeds, there is a lowering of tension commensurate with the strong expectancy of the first part of the event. Clearly, the time factors contribute much to the success of these witticisms.

Another series of witticisms which follows expert preparation occurs in a speech entitled "Faith in Liberation," delivered by Stevenson at a meeting of the State Committee of the Liberal Party, New York City, August 28, 1952.<sup>12</sup>

Our opponents also have a platform. In modern times they've honored us Democrats by borrowing many phrases from past Democratic platforms. Now because of the timing of the conventions, this inevitably leaves them four years behind. But I suppose plagiarism must, nevertheless, be considered a form of progress.

And this is open season for that kind of progress. This is the time when even the most obsolete Republican becomes momentarily reconciled to the machine age. He listens—he's very apt to listen with a stiff upper lip—while his

candidate calls for those greater social gains which a few minutes before they called wild-eyed socialism. In this season Republican candidates are even forgiven for whispering that there could be a better law than the Taft-Hartley Act.

The season when Republican hearts regularly throb with such thoughts is, of course, the autumn of Presidential years. This is indeed a truly remarkable interval, a sort of pause in the Republican occupation and I've often thought that it might well be called the liberal hour. But it should never be confused with any period when Congress is in session.

Here preparation is an integral part of the major idea of each section containing the witticism. In stressing his belief that the Republicans have brazenly stolen the Democratic platform, Stevenson utilizes tension, "shock," and surprise leading to a measure of relief as comprehension takes place. Moments of "insight" come with these phrases:

"leaves them four years behind"

"a form of progress"

"reconciled to the machine age"

"a better law than the Taft-Hartley Act"

"the autumn of Presidential years"

"pause in the Republican occupation"

"called the liberal hour"

"when Congress is in session"

Similarly, in a short comment on the Republican convention, Stevenson built to a peak of tension and relieved it:

After listening to this everlasting procession of epithets about our misdeeds I was even surprised the next morning when the mail was delivered on time: I guess our Republican friends were out of patience, out of sorts, and, need I add, out of office.<sup>13</sup>

## II. THE RHETORICAL CLIMATE FOR HUMOR

Since acquired interests, knowledge, and attitudes govern individual responses to presented stimuli and in the dynamic interaction of the total situation establish its affective tone, it is clear

<sup>12</sup> In *Welcoming Address*, Democratic National Convention, Chicago, Ill., July 21, 1952, in Stevenson, *Major Campaign Speeches*, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Stevenson, *Major Campaign Speeches*, p. 31.

that the speaker who attempts humor must pay as much attention to the past experience of his audience as he does to the technical requirements of humor. In fact, he must realize that adequate information, in addition to certain attitudes and feelings of his listeners, will facilitate his bids for humor; and that, conversely, lack of familiarity with theme and language and different attitudes and feelings will inhibit humor or block it entirely.

In practice, humorists have recognized this need to examine closely the common interests and knowledge of their listeners. When touring, Bob Hope, for example, makes a point of learning such items as the names of popular night spots and local celebrities in a given city, so that he can make appropriate allusions to them in his program. Stephen Leacock reminded us that "this form of humor is of course as old and enduring as humanity. Egypt made jokes about Rameses building the Pyramids; Aristophanes of Athens took a rise out of Corinth; Chaucer took a crack at Stratford atte Bowe. In Ward's own boyhood,<sup>14</sup> young Charles Dickens, at a dinner in America, made his most colossal hit as a humorist,—it was at Richmond, Virginia,—by 'getting in a crack' at the new Richmond and Fredericksburg Railway."<sup>15</sup> The charm of the familiar is really the fun of knowing. Accordingly, annoyance rather than laughter appears on the faces of the uninitiated when the point of a joke depends upon professional jargon, foreign phrases, technical knowledge of a sport or profession, or secrets about the excitement of the night before. Nor do children laugh at the same things adults

do, for their knowledge is less. It goes without saying that sex jokes, universally comprehended, if not universally relished, by adults, are utterly meaningless to small children. And Aristotle's example, "Onward he came—and on his feet were—chilblains,"<sup>16</sup> would be wasted upon a barefoot tribe. Knowing that the Greeks wore sandals on their feet helps us to appreciate the shift from the expected "sandals" to the unexpected "chilblains."

Not only shared knowledge, but shared attitudes and feelings provide understanding among the members of a tightly knit group. Jokes among the members of any given profession are amusing to all; e.g., lawyers enjoy jokes on lawyers by lawyers. At a dinner of the Bar Association, jokes abounding in legal terms will not make sense to invited guests who do not understand the terms. In a large crowd, or in any group where lawyers are in a minority, or when someone outside the legal profession makes a joke belittling legal training or procedure, the lawyer is not likely to be amused.

Stevenson capitalized frequently on common knowledge, sentiments, and membership. For example, in the speech, "Faith in Liberalism,"<sup>17</sup> he appeals to pride in liberal (Democratic) policies, from which the Republicans supposedly had drawn *their* policies. He also calls on the audience's knowledge of Republican speeches and actions as well as upon knowledge of the origin (in Longfellow's "Children's Hour") of the phrases "pause in the Republican occupation" and "liberal hour." Stevenson was aware of the common experiences and sentiments of the group he was addressing.

<sup>14</sup> Artemus Ward, or Charles Farrar Browne, American humorist of the nineteenth century.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Leacock, *The Greatest Pages of American Humor, Selected and Discussed by Stephen Leacock* (New York, 1936), p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> *Rhetorica*, 1412 a, 25-30, tr. W. Rhys Roberts, *Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. with introd. Richard McKeon (New York, 1941).

<sup>17</sup> Stevenson, *Major Campaign Speeches*, p. 31.

Looking closely at the statements regarding the affective tone of an audience receptive to mirth, we find that many writers consider friendly feelings, uncritical attitudes, and a feeling of superiority to the elements in the joke the most necessary conditions for mirth. At least speakers frequently testify that warm and friendly audiences provoke increased effort, while others stifle confidence and thought. Certainly we have all observed that in speeches before heterogeneous groups, political campaigners are often reserved, tied to conventional phrases; before microphones in huge auditoriums, speakers of all subjects are noticeably conservative. Yet in a small gathering, or before a homogeneous group, a different spirit dominates. Is it accidental that geniality and witty metaphor are plentiful in Stevenson's speech on Governor's Day at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield? Or that there is no humor in a broadcast to the Armed Forces Overseas on August 30, 1952? Or that some of his best wit occurs in a speech to the Colorado Volunteers for Stevenson, September 5, 1952? That some of his shrewdest irony appears in a speech in Portland entitled *The One-Party Press*, delivered at a luncheon for newspapermen? That there is no humor in a speech on *Tidelands Oil—Foreign Trade*, delivered in New Orleans, October 10, and very slight humor (two items, widely spaced) in *The New South*, given in Richmond, Virginia, September 20, 1952?<sup>18</sup> Stevenson was on his home ground at his own state fair, introducing popular Vice-President Alben Barkley. When he talked to the armed forces, he was addressing a large, dispersed group, far from home. At the dinner in Denver, the Volunteers for Stevenson were homo-

geneous, friendly, enthusiastically and voluntarily working for his election. The newspapermen in Portland were used to ready give and take and needed no quarter. In New Orleans, as in Richmond, Stevenson was talking about a precarious subject, one he did not intend to evade, one about which, in his own words, he wanted "to come clean."

What about an attitude of superiority, upheld by Hobbes and others, notably Ludovici, as the one ingredient essential to laughter? The practice of modern humorists suggests that the attitude of superiority in the audience should be preserved. Radio comedians Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, and George and Gracie Allen retain their popularity in part by the simple expedient of permitting the audience to feel superior, by submitting themselves to indignities which the listeners feel immune to.<sup>19</sup> Irvin S. Cobb's two rules for writing humor were: Avoid giving offense to anyone and take the attitude that: "I'm a bigger ass than you can ever hope to be. We're both in the same boat, so bear with me while I make a confession for the two of us."<sup>20</sup> Even those humorists whose stock in trade is poking fun at the foibles of the human race keep the feeling of superiority intact in their listeners by declaring: "What fools all mortals be—myself prominently included."<sup>21</sup> The inclusion of the speaker's "Self" saves such an approach from depleting the self-respect of the audience and even increases group solidarity by drawing the speaker nearer to his listeners. Yet, how far can the public

<sup>19</sup> Personal immunity to the witticism or joke, is of course, the feeling of superiority over others which Hobbes, Ludovici, and Rapp believe is basic to laughter.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas L. Masson, *Our American Humorists* (New York, 1922), p. 102.

<sup>21</sup> In *Our American Humorists*, p. 103, Masson contends that George Ade, Bill Nye, Don Marquis, Ring Lardner, Ed Howe, Walt Mason, and Ellis Parker Butler repeatedly used this device.

<sup>18</sup> See *Major Campaign Speeches* for the texts of these speeches.



speaker or classroom lecturer go in appealing to feelings of superiority by making himself the butt of the joke? The caution of the rhetoricians, that the speaker who wants to persuade must never descend to the level of the buffoon, seems wise. While Quintilian's insistence upon dignity may be too unqualified, too strong for the after-dinner speech or television panel discussion, we cannot discount the fact that an audience *expects* a certain level of dignity commensurate with the speaker's position of authority and influence; when that *expectancy* ends in disappointment, the speaker himself presents an incongruity unsuited to persuasion.

A striking illustration of an occasion when inventive skill is wasted because of erroneous judgment of attitude is one of Mark Twain's speeches, delivered at a dinner in honor of Whittier's seventieth birthday.<sup>22</sup> Twain relates that he worked with care upon his material. Yet, instead of amusing his audience, he confounded and offended most of them. Their confusion and annoyance, in turn, upset Twain and affected his delivery. The occasion is a perfect example of Mead's contention that the response of the audience is also a stimulus for the speaker's response,<sup>23</sup> and that the interrelation between speaker and audience goes on without intermission during a speech, adding to or subtracting from the success of its delivery. Twain's audience at first faced him with courteous interest which soon turned to dismay, or worse. As he described it:

the house's attention continued, but the expression of interest in the faces turned to a sort of black frost. I wondered what the trouble was. I didn't know. I went on, but with difficulty—I struggled along, and entered upon that miner's

fearful description of the bogus Emerson, the bogus Holmes, the bogus Longfellow, always hoping—but with a gradually perishing hope—that somebody would laugh, or that somebody would at least smile, but nobody did. I didn't know enough to give it up and sit down, I was too new at public speaking, and so I went on with this awful performance and carried it through to the end, in front of a body of people who seemed turned to stone with horror. It was the stork of expression their faces would have worn if I had been making these remarks about the Deity and the rest of the Trinity; there is no milder way in which to describe the petrified condition and the ghastly expression of those people.<sup>24</sup>

It is likely that during the period of invention, Twain was too enamored with his own fancies to evaluate them in the light of the previous experience of his New England audience. In caricaturing Longfellow, Whittier, and Emerson, he was belittling the literary and moral superiority which the New Englanders felt to be their heritage. As an outsider Twain might well have taken to heart Aristotle's advice:

We must also take into account the nature of our particular audience when making a speech of praise; for, as Socrates used to say, it is not difficult to praise the Athenians to an Athenian audience. If the audience esteems a given quality, we must say that our hero has that quality, no matter whether we are addressing Scythians or Spartans or philosophers. Everything, in fact, that is esteemed we are to represent as noble. After all, people regard the two things as much the same.<sup>25</sup>

The qualities with which Twain endowed his "bogus Emerson, the bogus Holmes, the bogus Longfellow," were not, after all, the qualities which the New Englanders admired. Whether Twain deliberately chose to overlook the literary pride accorded the three gods he ridiculed, whether he thought his own ability was sufficient to counteract the listeners' sensitivities, or whether

<sup>22</sup> In Boston, Dec. 17, 1877. The hosts were the publishers of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

<sup>23</sup> See George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, ed. Charles M. Morris (Chicago, 1934), pp. 77-78, *et passim*.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel L. Clemens, *Mark Twain's Speeches*, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup> *Rhetorica*, 1367 b, 7-12.



he really "didn't know any better," we can never be sure. But since it is possible to discover certain characteristics about any given audience, it behooves a speaker to utilize such information in choosing or inventing jokes and witticisms. The successful arousal of mirth depends upon arranging words so that appropriate memories are stirred; but above all, upon the wise appraisal of the stock of memories an audience possesses. No matter how much readers today may chuckle over the speech Twain gave at Whittier's birthday dinner, by our definition of meaning,<sup>26</sup> we shall be forced to agree with Twain's august audience that the speech was not funny at the time it was delivered.

Twain's error in judgment seems almost inexcusable when we recall that "in a group characterized by dependable understanding and anticipation of one another's roles, one's own role can be taken with relative confidence."<sup>27</sup> There was a strong consciousness among the assembled guests of New England's prestige, and certainly an understanding among them "of one another's roles." Twain should therefore have been able to proceed with "relative confidence." It is only in a "random collection of individuals that one can have no confident anticipation of others' roles—nor, hence, of one's own."<sup>28</sup> Even though Twain was not a New Englander, he could have proceeded safely if he had praised, not belittled, what the group held as praiseworthy. In short, his failure came because he disregarded existing attitudes and feelings of pride and loyalty.

### III. THE VALUE OF HUMOR

In our search for the essentials of humor, we have assumed that the speaker would find the humorous response valuable in a speaking situation. Is this assumption warranted? In other words, is the mirth-response as we have identified it worth planning for? We recall that the mirth-response cannot occur unless a carefully constructed stimulus, presented to a friendly, open-minded (objective) audience, arouses in rapid succession perceptions of incongruity, surprise (which is an interruption), and relief. Are these elements in the humorous process desirable in most speaking situations? To begin with, even though the majority of writers concede therapeutic values to the *relief* which precedes laughter, there is no evidence that a speech situation calls for such therapy. Second, the rhetorical concept of persuasion is incompatible with a state of objectivity if objectivity means freedom from emotions or pre-occupations.<sup>29</sup> Third, the theorists do not support the generally accepted notion that humor *produces* friendliness.

P. E. Lull holds the view that laughter is valuable as relief. Yet in an experiment designed to determine the utility of humor in persuasive speaking, he found no significant differences in responses gained by speeches containing humor and those containing none.<sup>30</sup> When is relief so necessary that the speaker must interrupt his train of thought in order to relieve tensions he has noted or created? Perhaps humor is a welcome interlude when several speakers follow one another in a symposium or on a long convention program.

<sup>26</sup> For the theory that response is the test of meaning, again see Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, p. 46, 77-78.

<sup>27</sup> Theodore Newcomb, *Social Psychology* (New York, 1950), p. 323.

<sup>28</sup> Newcomb, p. 323.

<sup>29</sup> See John Dewey, *Art As Experience* (New York, 1934), pp. 257-258, for comprehensive statement on objectivity.

<sup>30</sup> *An Objective Study of the Effectiveness of Humor in Persuasive Speeches*, Ph.D. thesis, U. of Wisconsin, 1939.

Doubtless humorous relief is desirable when conflict is in the air, or expressed in words, as in a debate or heated forum. Certainly, to any audience listening to a speech for longer than twenty minutes in our time-conscious age, humor is a helpful transition between the sections of the speech. Humor in the introduction of a speech, when only one speaker is on the program, is scarcely needed for relief. Is humor helpful for any other reason? Actually, an introductory anecdote may signify that all is well, that the speaker and audience are together superior to whatever may occur. In this way humor can dispel strain and help the audience to relax before the speaker begins. For instance, political lampooning satisfies the lampooner and the members of his party that they are free of the dangers which their opponents have embraced, e.g., graft.

According to our theory, the moment of relief follows upon surprise, and the relief, or let-down, is a complete standstill in perception—an interruption. Does the speaker want or need such an interruption? Greig wrote: "Behavior is felt as pleasant which is in a fair way to reach its appropriate end-result; behavior is felt as unpleasant which is being prevented from reaching its appropriate end-result."<sup>31</sup> If the speaker seeking action from his audience has motivated them so that, in the words of the social psychologist, they are "goal-oriented," the interruption of humor may be felt as unpleasant and annoying. A class with the goal of passing a final examination will perhaps not laugh much at a joke the professor tells as he hands out the questions, but will find the same joke exceedingly funny in a day or two, when each member learns that he has received a passing grade, or

better, on the examination. We may conclude that interruptions are annoying when the listener's attention is fastened on the outcome of an activity. Since the speaker, with the exception of the after-dinner speaker, wants his listeners (1) to feel the urgency of his appeal and (2) do something about it, how can he expect the interruption of humor to further his purpose?

Our theorists have agreed that the most important condition for the perception of humor is a state of objectivity or disinterest, i.e., a state of neutrality toward the elements of the joke and likewise a state uncomplicated by specialized desire or conflicting emotion.<sup>32</sup> When does such objectivity, so favorable to the reception of humorous stimuli, exist? Doubtless objectivity prevails at most dinner programs—but as Mark Twain found, to his chagrin, even on a festive occasion the drop from euphoria can be almost fatal when a speaker misjudges community attitudes. The New Englanders could not substitute an emotion of mirth for long-held feelings of pride and affection; they may have had no serious preoccupations, but they were not neutral toward the main objects of Twain's exaggerated tale.

Perhaps the similarity between conditions for problem-solving and conditions for the perception of humor will lead in the future to enlightening experimentation, for objectivity exists in successful group discussions where orderly problem-solving takes place. Here is a situation which should provide easy access to humor. At this point, however, the usual cautions prevail; it seems rele-

<sup>32</sup> See Dewey, *Art As Experience*, pp. 257-258; Freud, *Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, tr. and ed. Dr. A. A. Brill (New York, 1938), pp. 790-791; H. J. Eysenck, "The Appreciation of Humour: an Experimental and Theoretical Study," *British Jour. of Psychology* XXXII, 4 (April, 1942), p. 307, among others.

<sup>31</sup> J. Y. T. Greig, *The Psychology of Laughter and Comedy* (New York, 1923), p. 18.

vant to point out that misplaced humor can dispel objectivity.

In fact, although the humorist may consider objectivity "a state devoutly to be wished," he can scarcely count on its presence. For it seems that in most platform speeches, a speaker advocating a course of action ordinarily takes great pains to overcome neutrality by arousing feelings of pride, awakening a sense of justice, or tapping in any of innumerable ways the sources of feeling in his audience. If at the same time he brings wit to bear upon his subject, he is directing his hearers to forget (ever if momentarily) his main theme with its accompanying emotion—for only one emotion can dominate consciousness at any given time.<sup>33</sup> Or, if for the sake of a witticism he digresses from his main theme, he weakens his line of argument.<sup>34</sup> Should hearty laughter pervade the situation, has the speaker gained anything by the interruption?

The speaker's problem seems to be that of utilizing humor so wisely that it stimulates existing good will without interfering with his purpose, and brings relief in tense moments without hindering decision. That the compromise is a difficult one is attested to by several rhetoricians, notably Aristotle, Cicero, and Whately, who remarked that humor clouded issues and delayed judgments by forcing an interruption.<sup>35</sup>

Careful examination of existing theories also opens up to serious questioning the generally held notion that joking will *win* friends for the speaker. This notion conceivably springs from demonstrations of relief with laughter,

relief which supposedly has the power to banish hostility. Yet according to the investigators, if genuine hostility prevails, there will be no laughter.<sup>36</sup> Certainly, in everyday conversation, one is unlikely to begin punning and making witticisms as soon as he finds a new acquaintance. The jibe and "kidding" indicate a friendly feeling, but we have yet to prove that they *cause* a friendly feeling. Nor does the presence of a joke in the introduction of a speech establish causation. Only an analysis of the joke and the response accorded it can show whether it stirred an already existing friendliness, made an appeal to feelings of superiority within the group, or was in effect accorded only a perfunctory response. There is no evidence that witticisms and anecdotes can of themselves create a friendly "climate." In fact, more experimentation with the effect of presented items upon groups or individuals with known affiliations and leanings is highly in order.<sup>37</sup> Until contrary evidence comes in, we are forced to concur with Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Campbell, Whately, Freud, and their followers that a friendly "climate" facilitates mirth, but an unfriendly "climate" requires thoughtful survey.

Thus it appears that many claims for the value of humor in public address are open to question. If one wishes to use humor, he must risk, as does the poet, frequent misunderstanding. Since we call *humorous* only those situations arousing mirth, and since mirth is an emotion, humorous situations are emotional situations, stimulated by emotion-

<sup>33</sup> This started with Aristotle. Lord Kames, Freud, and John Bascom are among later supporters.

<sup>34</sup> See Richard Whately *Elements of Rhetoric* (Boston and Cambridge, 1857), p. 185.

<sup>35</sup> *Rhetorica*, 1415 a, 35-36; *De Oratore*, tr. E. W. Sutton, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1948), II, ii, p. 373; and Whately, *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> Muzafer Sherif, *An Outline of Social Psychology* (New York, 1948), p. 251; J. Y. T. Greig, pp. 66, 46, 63; G. Stanley Hall and Arthur Allin, "The Psychology of Tickling, Laughing and the Comic," *American Jour. of Psychology*, Vol. IX, I (October, 1897), p. 29.

<sup>37</sup> Richard N. Sears, in his unpublished diss. (Harvard, 1934), *Dynamic Factors in the Psychology of Humor*, made a distinguished effort of this kind.

arousing language. As emotional situations, they demand the exercise of great wisdom and judgment.<sup>38</sup> An or-

<sup>38</sup> Sears points out that even in an experimental situation "it is theoretically impossible entirely to eliminate—or even adequately to reduce—thematic and syncretistic aspects" of the mirth response. See his unpub. diss. (Harvard, 1934). Outside the laboratory, it is equally (how can one compare impossibilities?) so.

ganism can participate in only one event at a time, can feel only one emotion at a time. When emotion of humor dominates the organism, all action except laughter is excluded. The speaker must decide whether the relief of laughter is so essential to his purpose that he can risk shocking his audience out of its preoccupation with an avowed goal.



## EVALUATION OF THE MILITARY ALPHABETS

HENRY M. MOSER and JOHN J. DREHER\*

*The Ohio State University*

**P**HONETIC alphabets or word-spelling alphabets used for letter identification in voice communication have had a relatively long and varied history of use by both military and civilian organizations. They appeared as early as 1908 as a means of identifying alphabet flags in naval operations and a phonetic alphabet has been used by the Bell Telephone Company since 1913. Although until recent years most research in communications has been concerned with the improvement of technical facilities, the increasingly fast tempo of operations occasioned by technical betterment of all airplanes and battle craft during and since World War II has called attention to the importance of the human factor in communications and the degradation often attributable to human error. The phonetic alphabet can be an effective means of minimizing such errors.<sup>1</sup>

For over a decade the US-UK (Able-Baker-Charlie) alphabet has been used by the armed services and certain civilian organizations of the United States and the United Kingdom. Criticism of this alphabet by foreign pilots (notably the Spanish and French) has resulted in a new alphabet that was designed to remedy the pronunciation difficulties encountered by non-native speakers of English. This new list closely related

to that developed by the Spanish Caribbean fliers, was adopted as the standard word spelling alphabet by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

In the interests of effective joint and combined operations with allied services (notably the NATO nations) it was deemed desirable to explore some of the objections<sup>2</sup> posed and to attempt to determine by experimental test which of the two alphabets<sup>3</sup> is better suited for use by Americans and foreign personnel under varying conditions of communications.

The function of a spelling alphabet, of course, is to increase redundancy and so offset noise inherent in the communication process. Evidence from this laboratory and elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> however, indicates that even increased redundancy may not insure correct reception of a

<sup>2</sup> Item 230, Air Navigation Commission, 12th Session, 1952.

<sup>3</sup> Alphabets studied were:

(US-UK) ABLE, BAKER, CHARLIE, DOG, EASY, FOX, GEORGE, HOW, ITEM, JIG, KING, LOVE, MIKE, NAN, OBOE, PETER, QUEEN, ROGER, SUGAR, TARE, UNCLE, VICTOR, WILLIAM, X-RAY, YOKE, ZEBRA.

(ICAO) ALFA, BRAVO, COCA, DELTA, ECHO, FOXTROT, GOLF, HOTEL, INDIA, JULIETT, KILO, LIMA, METRO, NECTAR, OSCAR, PAPA, QUEBEC, ROMEO, SIERRA, TANGO, UNION, VICTOR, WHISKEY, EXTRA, YANKEE, ZULU.

(Digits) ONE, TWO, THREE, TREE, FOUR, FIVE, FIFE, SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE, NINER, ZERO, OH.

<sup>4</sup> Laboratory reports issued by the experimental psychology group of the British Civil Air Ministry, London.

\*Performed under contract AF 18(600)316 of Air Research and Development Command with the Ohio State University Research Foundation for Operational Applications Laboratory, Bolling Field, Washington, D.C. Major results extracted from Ohio State University Research Foundation Technical Report 519-3, part II.

<sup>1</sup> See Air Force Regulation 125 B.



signal if that signal is "confusable" (*i.e.*, has some properties that cause it to be given as a response even though another signal of the set may have been transmitted), or if it is "weak" (*i.e.*, lacks audibility and hence is omitted or incorrectly identified as another of the ensemble). These two weaknesses were particularly apparent in the US-UK alphabet when used with international operators and pilots. To a lesser extent the same criticism could be leveled against the ICAO words. The task of the Ohio State University laboratory was (a) to determine the better of the two alphabets, and (b) to locate the "trouble" words in the better set and replace them with suitable alternatives.

# I. INVESTIGATION

Inasmuch as international handling of the alphabet was in question, experimental subjects for initial test stages were drawn from representative groups of the student population at The Ohio State University. Many of the American groups were Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps students in their senior year; foreign groups<sup>5</sup> drew from exchange students, displaced persons, and airmen of other nations. Final stages of testing involved foreign and American air personnel from U. S. air bases.

Airmen, like people in general, are often resistant to a change in their old habits unless they are convinced of the wisdom of the change. Much of the resistance to the new spelling could be attributed to familiarity with the old without knowledge or appreciation of what the new alphabet sought to accomplish. Opinion was voiced against

the latter on the basis of excess syllables, words which sounded alike, and words which were for many reasons just not acceptable.<sup>6</sup> One of the first steps was to examine the extent and stability of attitudes towards the individual words of the old and new alphabets by both naive American and foreign subjects to determine if any prejudices existed.

Before any training the subjects rated all words in both sets on a 1-point preference scale using any criteria they chose *i.e.*, semantic, phonetic, personal, etc. These ratings indicated a wide difference between the foreign and American groups, with the former preferring the ICAO words, the latter strongly in favor of the US-UK set. The next step was to train thoroughly both groups of subjects in the use of both alphabets and retest to measure any shift in attitude. After a sixteen week period of daily work on each alphabet, the two groups showed no significant preference for either one. The prejudice had vanished after the newness had worn off. The inference here would be that familiarization through use would gain acceptance of the alphabet by international users.

Does an unfavorable attitude toward a word operate to handicap that word's performance? Comparison of pre-training ratings and the subsequent articulation scores of individual words shows no significant correlation of the two variables. Hence, it was concluded that within measurable limits such an inhibiting effect does not exist.

It was already known that familiarity

<sup>5</sup> Nationalities tested were: American, English, Australian, French, Belgian, German, Greek, Czech, Rumanian, Jordanian, Israeli, Finnish, Swedish, Italian, Colombian, Spanish, Turkish, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, and Indian.

<sup>6</sup> An innocent word in one language may have a socially unacceptable connotation in another. The word NUTS, for example, recently proposed as an N word by one nation was considered undignified and therefore objectionable by another.

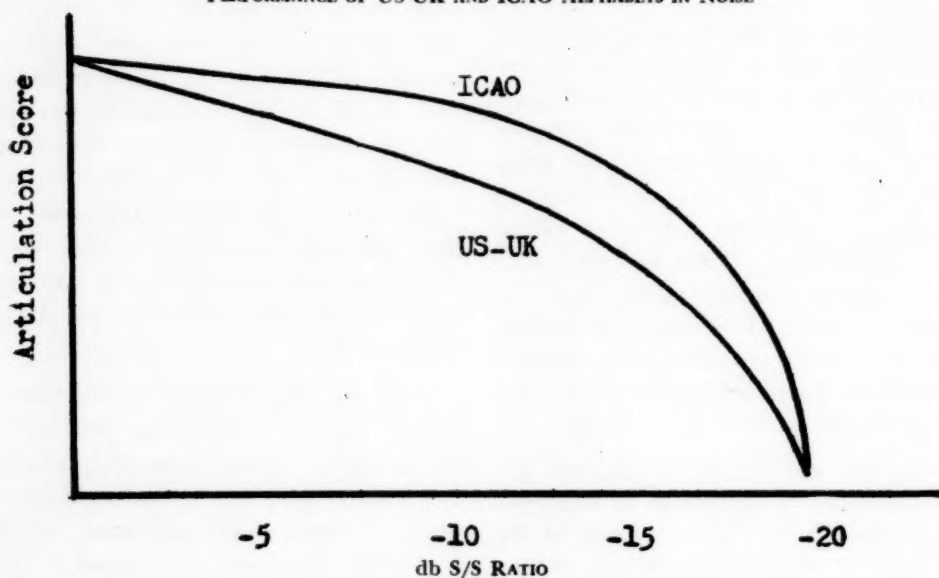
with a word set increases intelligibility.<sup>7</sup> Hence to compare the efficiency of the two alphabets, the listener must be completely trained with both sets; otherwise scores reflect degrees of training. How much training must be accomplished before scores level off and show no dif-

ference on retest? Previous estimates<sup>8</sup> give 10-15 hours. Our testing indicated that either alphabet required a minimum of 9 hours listening in order to designate a listener as trained. If he had listened to only American speakers while training, he was termed phonemic-

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF ARTICULATION RESULTS OF US-UK AND ICAO ALPHABETS USING INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS AND LISTENERS					
	db S/N RATIOS				
	0	-5	-10	-12	-16
US-UK	95.7	94.7	84.3	69.1	38.2
ICAO	95.4	97.1	92.5	78.6	39.9
t	1.01	3.28	7.75	5.20	2.93
d.f.	32	19	18	12	13
P. LEVEL	.30	.001	.001	.001	.01
SUPERIOR ALPHABET	Neither	ICAO	ICAO	ICAO	ICAO

GRAPH I  
PERFORMANCE OF US-UK AND ICAO ALPHABETS IN NOISE



<sup>7</sup> Mathematically considered, chance alone would specify the probability of identification of any member of an ensemble as  $\frac{1}{N}$ , when

$N$  equals the size of the ensemble. Familiarity with a word set effectively acts to reduce  $N$  in the above expression of probability from a large finite number (e.g., 25,000, the size of a listener's recognition vocabulary) to the  $N$  of any particular set, which, in the case of a word-spelling alphabet would be 26. This materially increases the probability of recognition.

ally naive, since he was not prepared for the set of words spoken by a speaker with a foreign dialect. If foreign speakers were included in the training period, listeners became both trained and pho-

<sup>8</sup> J. C. R. Licklider and G. A. Miller, "The Perception of Speech," *Handbook of Experimental Psychology*, ed., S. S. Stevens (New York, 1951) p. 1046.

netically sophisticated. Consequently, all subjects listened and responded to test lists in noise for a period of 12 hours and then started comparison runs. Both naive and sophisticated, trained and untrained groups were investigated. In all categories the same results were obtained from fairly continual testing over an 18 month period: the ICAO alphabet was significantly better when any appreciable noise was present in the circuit. Table I above presents a representative result of testing trained sophisticated groups.

The behavior of the two alphabets in noise, Graph I above, shows that under good, and again under almost impossible listening conditions, performance of both sets is about equal, both eventually failing because not enough cues reached the listener.

Now that trained subjects were available, the question of user preference could be evaluated. Although attitude ratings toward the two alphabets were similar, it was assumed that subjects with equal training in both might evince more confidence in the use of one than in the other when acting under duress. Accordingly, a series of tests requiring oral production of three word code groups indicated by tachisticopic pres-

entation of three random letters was devised and administered.

Subjects were instructed that either alphabet or any mixture was acceptable as an answer, and that only speed of production was to be measured. Their responses, made at top speed and recorded by a microphone in chest harness, indicated consistent and significantly greater use of ICAO words, regardless of the subject's nationality.

Articulation tests in which both US-UK and ICAO alphabets were used, however, resulted in a slight impairment of response in both sets. The extent of unimpaired absorption of additional words is as yet undetermined.

## II. ANALYSIS OF ARTICULATION TESTS

The most critical level (greatest differential) was found to be at -12db S7N ratio, and that ratio was subsequently used in many preliminary word set examinations in choosing alternate words.

Mere articulation scores of either ensembles or individual words offer little help in locating or remedying weak spots. Consequently, an item analysis and visual display were resorted to. Shown below is the scheme of an item analysis:

	A	B	C	Z	Omiss.	Total	% Art.
A		1			2	46	86.2
B	3		14		15	54	76.1
C		12			23	26	91.2
Total Confusion				Totals			

FIGURE 1—ITEM ANALYSIS MODEL

Rows totals show substitution and omission errors.  
Column totals show response of a word to other words spoken.

From such an analysis the individual word success may be read in the extreme right column. The column totals by letter now afford a new measure, namely that of "confusability," or that measure of a word's tendency to be heard even though others of the ensemble were spoken. The confusability figure<sup>9</sup> together with the articulation score offers a profile of a word in its set, and this allows a double goal to be set up. The ideal word would have a maximum articulation value and zero confusability. This concept now supplants earlier thinking in intelligibility

that a high articulation score (alone) is to be sought.

To isolate trouble spots we need only to look for high density error cells in the analysis.

Figures 2 and 3 below illustrate the use of the item analysis. All error amounts exceeding an arbitrary value have been circled. The number of circles, then, is a rough comparison of the two alphabets. The line of attack for improvement is indicated in removing as many of the circles as possible by judicious substitution of words.

Three more words were changed with results going the other way—more confusions being introduced than were removed although cropping up in unexpected parts of the matrix. The problem is not unlike that of pushing a dent out of a child's ball—even a successful push puts some dent of its own in some other place. Eventually, however, the word UNIFORM was selected as the U symbol. This resultant 4-word modification was then tested for its interaction with the digits (0-9) using the regular pronunciation and the recommended ICAO alternate digit pronunciations

$$^9 \text{ Defined for a word as: } C = \frac{t_c}{TR - R_L}$$

$$\text{for an alphabet: } C = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N t_c}{TR - R_L}$$

where:

$t_c$  = the column error total for a word

TR = Total number of responses in the test

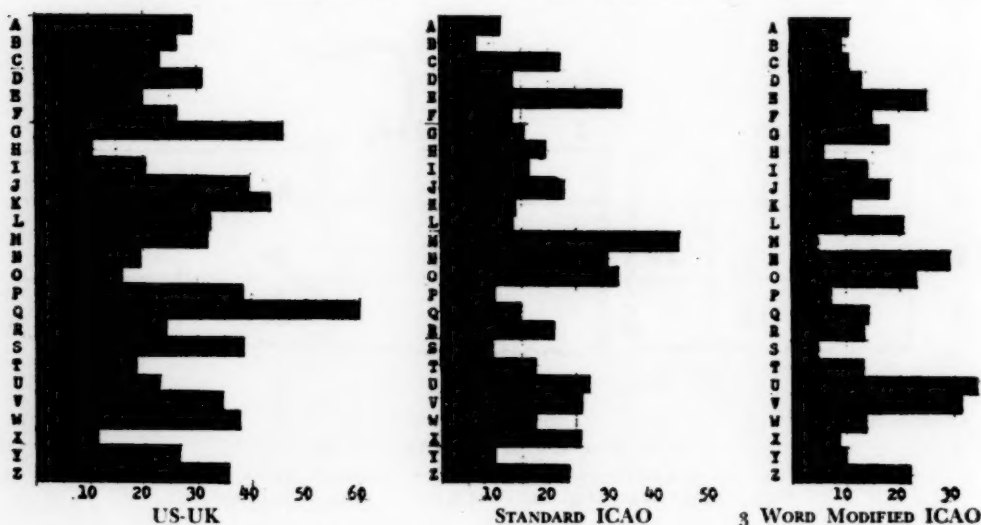
$R_L$  = Maximum possible correct response

N = Number of different words in the alphabet

C = Confusability value

These values, of course, are extracted from the item analysis matrix.

Chart I—Articulation Errors (% Missed) of US-UK and ICAO Alphabets





and only  
cells in

																										ARTICULATION VALUE	
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	Total Onas Gr. Tex	
15	23	3	6	3	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	86.10 38	
1	8	2	1	3	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	52.17 69	
5	7	23	6	18	24	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	175.14 189	
7	3	25	4	3	5	1	3	3	2	4	10	2	4	3	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	106.16 122	
4	3	18	5	6	2	32	5	7	3	3	26	10	6	14	6	14	6	14	6	14	6	14	6	14	6	267.27 294	
1	2	3	3	3	5	1	5	1	2	2	27	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	106.10 116	
2	7	12	29	2	8	18	2	1	2	11	13	2	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	123.24 141	
13	4	4	6	28	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	152.11 163	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	130.18 148	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	182.22 204	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	109.14 123	
7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	105.9 114	
2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	352.21 373	
2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	244.11 255	
15	1	13	2	9	16	4	18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	259.14 273	
15	8	9	1	3	11	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	77.12 89	
3	6	1	11	1	1	6	10	1	13	4	1	5	16	2	14	2	3	2	4	1	3	2	4	1	3	116.21 137	
1	27	5	4	2	1	16	17	2	8	3	8	5	7	1	8	12	5	20	1	2	2	12	2	12	2	167.16 183	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	27.12 39	
4	3	5	1	11	1	12	8	1	2	12	8	3	4	15	4	3	1	21	4	1	2	12	1	2	12	1	136.18 154
2	1	3	12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	217.18 235	
2	2	2	28	3	1	6	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	206.18 224	
3	4	2	80	8	1	4	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	137.14 151	
2	2	4	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	200.16 216	
1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	73.15 88
1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	185.9 194
90.75 182 145 360 180 54 179 174 142 100 117 162 178 214 123 119 54 100 60 267 157 142 351 80 176 393 407 4598																											

78.6%

78.6%

FIGURE 3—ICAO (Standard)

Three of the ICAO troublemakers were METRO, COCA, and EXTRA. COCA clashed heavily with HOTEL, METRO with NECTAR, and vice-versa; EXTRA was hopelessly tied up orthographically with E. Eventually CHARLIE, MIKE, and X-RAY from the US-UK set were chosen and tested as successful alternates. The effect of this change may be observed in Figure 4 below.

N=22

30,592 RESPONSES

Three of the ICAO troublemakers were METRO, COCA, and EXTRA. COCA clashed heavily with HOTEL, METRO with NECTAR, and vice-versa; EXTRA was hopelessly tied up orthographically with E. Eventually CHARLIE, MIKE, and X-RAY from the US-UK set were chosen and tested as successful alternates. The effect of this change may be observed in Figure 4 below.

																										Over	Under	Percentage	Value	
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z					
2	2	5																								47	94.6			
4																										4	18	97.9		
7																										20	97.7			
3																										2	19	97.8		
																										2	19	97.8		
																										3	26	94.9		
																										6	13	98.5		
																										5	99	98.5		
																										4	23	97.3		
																										10	42	95.1		
																										4	42	95.1		
																										8	28	94.7		
																										5	63	92.7		
																										8	80	90.7		
																										2	113	86.9		
																										1	29	96.6		
																										8	65	92.4		
																										8	30	96.5		
																										4	7	99.1		
																										10	29	96.6		
																										3	5	99.4		
																										5	113	86.2		
																										2	19	97.8		
																										6	64	92.6		
																										3	20	97.7		
																										5	111	87.1		
28	19	24	17	54	136	23	65	61	36	35	25	28	42	90	16	32	11	37	4	26	114	46	103	7	79	132	1250			
																												94.3 %		

FIGURE 4—ICAO (Modified)

S/N RATIO = -12 db.

N=24

Another complete series of tests confirmed the stability of this changed ICAO set, which was termed the "first modification."

22,464 RESPONSES

TREE, FIFE, and NINER for 3, 5, and 9. Figure 4 shows graphically the results of this test, this time employing high-school students<sup>10</sup> as listeners to international speakers.

Clearly, variant digit pronunciations are unsatisfactory, while an extremely low interaction of mistakes exists between the alphabet words and digits. Most of the errors are confined to the respective sets (*i.e.*, numbers were confused with numbers, not alphabet words, and *vice-versa*). British tests (1954) of the US-UK alphabet and digits indicated inferior performance of that version.

Reports from the British Civil Air Ministry experimental groups about a NECTAR-VICTOR confusion started another complete phase of investigation to locate alternate words for those two. To save time a preliminary screening test was employed. On the basis of previously established criteria<sup>11</sup> the possible words<sup>12</sup> were assigned to a maximum confusion group for intensive comparisons. Selections were narrowed down to NOTAM and/or VAMPIRE. Stimulus lists, systematically varying one word at a time, and using both words, were recorded at the Amarillo Air Force Base and administered both there and at the University under headset and free-field conditions. The results were in agreement: either NOTAM or VAMPIRE singly yielded inferior set scores

<sup>10</sup> Some question was raised to the effects of stratified sampling by using only college-level listeners. No significant differences were found between high-school and college groups with equivalent training in handling the test materials.

<sup>11</sup> Many restrictions apply to word choice. It must: 1. Be familiar to the average speaker of all nations expected to use it; 2. Have high audibility; 3. Have low confusability; 4. Be as short as possible to conserve channel time.

<sup>12</sup> Elimination of words was accomplished by submitting pooled lists to linguistic consultants for opinion, to international speaker panels for pronunciation, and to operational personnel for subjective evaluations.

to NECTAR and VICTOR, while substitution of both words gave "no-difference" comparisons. The only other alternative available was to make either the single substitution of NOVEMBER for NECTAR (a choice which would improve the alphabet at the negligible cost of adding another syllable), or NOVEMBER for NECTAR and OZONE for OSCAR to also clear up a serious OSCAR-FOXTROT confusion.

### III. RELATED PROBLEMS

A host of related problems bearing on word perception, quite apart from the actual words in question, have made their appearance. Three in particular which may be of interest to language research are (1) word position and its effect on errors, (2) different methods of voice presentation, and (3) effects of fatigue on articulation tests.

The first problem came into focus through a British observation that in the course of their testing more errors resulted on the second word of the three-word stimulus group than in either the first or third position. American results had shown that the third word had yielded more error.<sup>13</sup> Subsequent analysis of the British tapes indicated that the British telling style, a rhythmic high-low-high intonation suppressed the intensity on the third word. From this it might be supposed that a straight forward cause-and-effect conclusion might be drawn. However, it was discovered that listeners trained in the American telling pattern still continued to make third-word errors even on the British tapes. Here, apparently, was an indication that listening habits had some definite effect on scores. Further infor-

<sup>13</sup> H. M. Moser and J. J. Dreher, "The Effect of Code Group Word Position upon Errors," Technical Report 519-4, The Ohio State University Research Foundation, October, 1953.



mation on this aspect is yet to be gathered.

The second consideration, presentation methods, is a logical follow-up of the various possibilities that exist or have been used operationally in the past. One way to try for greater message accuracy is to repeat it. This assumes, of course, that repetition materially enhances accuracy, an idea not entirely sound, as shown earlier.<sup>14</sup> The phrase, "I say again," followed by a repetition of the message is the standard form.<sup>15</sup> Another method enjoying current vogue on police R/T networks is the initial-letter-repeat method (e.g. D-David, G-George, etc.)

A battery of tests on the 3-letter code group pattern, employing the single telling, the repeat "I say again" method, and the initial-letter-repeat procedure was run on American listeners using a trained American speaker.<sup>16</sup> Results showed the "I say again" method to be best, with the single telling style (no repetition) second best. The initial-letter-repeat method was entirely unsatisfactory.

Communications personnel are understandably concerned over the possibility of message failure through human operator fatigue. Previously, Licklider and Miller<sup>17</sup> have reported no measureable effects of fatigue on subjects listening in high noise. It may be possible, however,

that a qualitative assessment of fatigue can be demonstrated by the item analysis, which differentiates between wrong answers and omitted answers. Fatigue runs with ROTC students have shown that toward the end of a protracted listening session in high noise the omitted answers were significantly and importantly greater in whichever alphabet was given last, and this result could be achieved at will by the experimenter.<sup>18</sup> Thus, either alphabet could be made to show a better score merely by assigning its presentations toward the beginning of the testing session. The differential, however, was always observed in the number of omissions and not in the wrong guesses on words. It was assumed that the tendency to allow a faint stimulus to pass untried was an evidence of fatigue, inasmuch as the same noise level acted quite differently in producing omit-responses with a fresh group. It would appear, then, that fatigue effects are actually present and that further investigation is in order to uncover the best methods to offset them.

The above discussed aspects represent but a small part of the immensely complex question of polyglot communication, a question of vital importance to a world moving at an ever increasing speed. Research on voice procedures for an inter-national language of the air is now being actively pursued by Canada, Great Britain, and the United States, and progress in both basic and applied research problems represents a firm step forward in the quest for security in world air travel.

<sup>14</sup> G. A. Miller, G. A. Heise, and W. Lichten, "The Intelligibility of Speech as a Function of the Context of the Test Materials," *Jour. Experimental Psychology*, 41 (1951), 329-335.

<sup>15</sup> Air Force Regulation 125 B.

<sup>16</sup> H. M. Moser and J. J. Dreher, "Comparison of Code Group Presentation Methods," Technical Report 519-6, The Ohio State University Research Foundation, June, 1953.

<sup>17</sup> *Handbook*, p. 1046.

<sup>18</sup> H. M. Moser and J. J. Dreher, "Comparison of the US-UK and ICAO Phonetic Alphabets," Technical Report 519-3, part II, The Ohio State University Research Foundation, June 1953.

## THE BUILDING OF THE "FOUR FREEDOMS" SPEECH

LAURA CROWELL  
University of Washington

PRESIDENT Franklin D. Roosevelt had fought the depression in 1933 with stout words and million dollar blows. Eight years later, when Britain faced Nazi tyranny with dire shortages of war matériel and near depletion of dollar resources, he planned Lend-Lease<sup>1</sup> and needed accompanying stout words for the American people. The Annual Address to the Congress of January 6, 1941,<sup>2</sup> was prepared in order to fill that need. Its seven drafts offer the rhetorical critic excellent opportunity for studying the step-by-step development<sup>3</sup> of a significant address.

As usual with the Roosevelt addresses, the manuscript was the product of several hands. Adolf Berle of the State Department had sent over to the White House an excellent draft for the proposed message, and Benjamin Cohen gave valuable assistance during its preparation. But the President had dictated five pages to begin with, and Harry Hopkins, Robert Sherwood and

Sam Rosenman helped him do the actual work on the drafts.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the corrections and insertions throughout the drafts are in the handwriting of Roosevelt. Furthermore, it has been so well established that his was the hand behind the final copy—its thought and its form—that it matters somewhat less whose vocabulary and sensitivity furnished the word or whose imagination produced the comparison.<sup>5</sup> It is of much more interest to the student of rhetoric to know what adjustments, substitutions, revisions were made in the tailoring of the speech to its purpose than to discover who originated the suggestions.

The purpose of this study is not, then, to find out who suggested the changes, nor to judge whether they were beneficial, nor is it to assess whether the argument of the address is valid or the address itself an effective rhetorical instrument. Briefly, its aim is to survey the evolution of those 143 sentences that composed the manuscript from which Roosevelt read as he stood before the Congress on the morning of January

<sup>1</sup> The Lend-Lease plan, later called a "brain wave," by Lord Keynes, was devised by Roosevelt after receiving a lengthy letter from Churchill explaining the military and financial difficulties confronting Britain. Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt* (New York, 1952), pp. 256-257. Roosevelt had first disclosed his plan publicly at a press conference on Dec. 17, 1940, using the homely example of lending a garden hose to a neighbor whose home was on fire. In his fireside chat of Dec. 29, he brought forth his bold suggestion that America act as the "arsenal of democracy." The Lend-Lease Bill was sent to Congress and numbered HR-1776.

<sup>2</sup> *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, compiled by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York, 1941), IX, 663-672.

<sup>3</sup> The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York, had each of the drafts microfilmed for this study. From the film it has been possible to follow the corrections and deletions made on the different drafts and to see the inserts which were prepared.

<sup>4</sup> Rosenman, *Roosevelt*, p. 262.

<sup>5</sup> "No matter how frequently the speech assistants were changed through the years, the speeches were always Roosevelt's. They all expressed the personality, the convictions, the spirit, the mood of Roosevelt. No matter who worked with him in the preparation, the finished product was always the same—it was Roosevelt himself." Rosenman, *Roosevelt*, p. 12.

"The investigation of Franklin Roosevelt's methods of preparing seventeen of his addresses on international affairs reveals that the late President was the primary source of the ideas, the arguments, and the language of those speeches." Earnest Brandenburg, "The Preparation of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Speeches," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 35 (1949), 221.

6, 1941. The analysis will cover these phases: first, the preliminary movements of material, as seen in the entrance and exit of ideas; and, second, the definitive adjustments, with attention to the form and effect of the changes.

## I. ENTRANCE OF IDEAS

Five pages prepared by Roosevelt himself constitute the first draft. Approximately 60% of this first dictation becomes part of the Reading Copy, largely in the opening paragraphs of the ad-

### CHART I

FIRST APPEARANCE OF SENTENCES COMPOSING THE READING COPY

Draft number—								Draft number—								Draft number—							
Sentence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sentence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sentence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.....		2						51.....		2						101.....		2					
2.....		2						52.....		2						102.....		2					
3.....	1							53.....		2						103.....			3				
4.....	1							54.....		2						104.....			3				
5.....							7	55.....				4				105.....			3				
6.....	1							56.....		2						106.....		2					
7.....	1							57.....		2						107.....		2					
8.....	1							58.....		2						108.....		2					
9.....						6		59.....		2						109.....		2					
10.....						6		60.....		2						110.....		2					
11.....	1							61.....		2						111.....		2					
12.....	1							62.....		2						112.....		2					
13.....	1							63.....				4				113.....		2					
14.....	1							64.....				4				114.....		2					
15.....						6		65.....				4				115.....		2					
16.....	1							66.....		2						116.....		2					
17.....	1							67.....					6			117.....		2					
18.....	1							68.....					6			118.....		2					
19.....			3					69.....					6			119.....			3				
20.....			3					70.....					6			120.....			3				
21.....						6		71.....					6			121.....				4			
22.....		2						72.....					6			122.....				4			
23.....		2						73.....		2						123.....				4			
24.....		2						74.....		2						124.....				4			
25.....					5			75.....		2						125.....				4			
26.....		2						76.....		2						126.....					6		
27.....		2						77.....		2						127.....				4			
28.....		2						78.....		2						128.....			3				
29.....						6		79.....		2						129.....			3				
30.....			3					80.....		2						130.....			3				
31.....					5			81.....		2						131.....			3				
32.....					5			82.....		2						132.....					6		
33.....			3					83.....		2						133.....					6		
34.....					5			84.....		2						134.....				4			
35.....					5			85.....		2						135.....				4			
36.....		2						86.....		2						136.....				4			
37.....					5			87.....		2						137.....				4			
38.....					5			88.....		2						138.....				4			
39.....					5			89.....					6			139.....				4			
40.....					5			90.....					6			140.....				4			
41.....					5			91.....					6			141.....				4			
42.....					5			92.....							7	142.....				4			
43.....					5			93.....					6			143.....				4			
44.....	1							94.....					6										
45.....	1							95.....					6										
46.....	1							96.....					6										
47.....		2						97.....					6										
48.....	1							98.....				4											
49.....					4			99.....				4											
50.....						6		100.....				4											

dress.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, much expansion occurs in the second draft: in fact, about a third (37.06%) of the final sentences make their entrance in this draft. (See Chart I.)

The contribution of the various drafts to the thought structure of the Reading Copy is roughly as follows:

*Draft One*—America has not in the past faced the threat of domination; the present problem is unique.

*Draft Two*—America is endangered by the threat of dictator victory and must become the "arsenal" of the world. The American people have a part in defending their own way of life. A great increase in armament production is necessary but in the meantime social improvements must not be neglected.

*Draft Three*—The Army, Navy and Air Corps have made progress. Certain social advances are necessary in America, and the "four freedoms" must be maintained throughout the world.

*Draft Four*—America proposes a world order in contrast to the "New Order" sought by the dictators. Immediate aid to the nations attacked is necessary.

*Draft Five*—Benjamin Franklin warned against giving up freedom for a moment of safety. America must beware of the forms that invasion will take.

*Draft Six*—The United States opposes enforced isolation. Our preparatory efforts are in various stages of progress.

*Draft Seven*—There is unity in the United States today.

## II. EXIT OF IDEAS

The only large block of material eliminated concerns the 1940 report on the production efforts of the Army, Navy and Air Corps. This fact-filled statement, entering as a forty-five sentence insertion in the third draft, is replaced by two brief paragraphs of inferential nature in the following draft, of which

<sup>6</sup> Of the sentences in Roosevelt's dictation, 16 persist in roughly the same form to the Reading Copy; of the first 18 sentences of the Reading Copy, 12 are presented in recognizable form in this first draft.

only two sentences survive in draft five and later.

Smaller blocks are deleted in the reworking of other drafts. The first major deletion occurs in the revision of draft three, the omission of a passage from Roosevelt's dictation dealing with the Monroe Doctrine. Rearrangement of draft five drops out details of the efforts of industry and labor; adjustment in draft six deletes explanation of the demands of this threatening hour on the attitudes and behavior of the American people as well as details of the nature of emergency assistance to other nations. Even the revision for the final draft brings an omission, that of several sentences spelling out America's "vulnerable frontier."

## III. FORM OF THE ADJUSTMENTS

These major movements of material have been but preliminary to the intensive work of obtaining effective phraseology and form for the ideas selected. The changes made in this process take several forms: *substitution*, *addition*, *insertion*, *revision* (including relocation), and *deletion*.

Of the definitive changes made in formulating the Reading Copy, approximately one third (29.10%) are *substitutions*, one fourth (24.29%), *revisions*, and another fourth (21.44%), *insertions*. *Deletions* account for a smaller proportion of changes (14.66%), and *additions*, the smallest of all (10.50%).<sup>7</sup>

These changes take place in material which has entered the manuscript both early and late. For example, the tenth sentence in the Reading Copy enters the

<sup>7</sup> The *substitutions* are frequent in each quarter of the speech, and do not differ much in quantity throughout the four sections. The *deletions* are fewer in number, but also approximately the same for all quarters. The *additions*, *insertions* and *revisions* are all higher in the first three-fourths than in the final quarter.



manuscript only in the sixth draft, whereas the eleventh sentence occurs in the first dictated pages and has thus been open to critical examination in every draft thereafter. Hence, when changes are made in both tenth and eleventh sentences in the work upon the seventh draft, the changes take place at once in material several times considered and material relatively new to the manuscript. This "newness" may be misleading, moreover, for in some cases the ideas have doubtless been well assembled before their formulation for this address; perhaps the most outstanding example is that of the "four freedoms" which Roosevelt had mentioned extemporaneously at a press conference six months before.<sup>8</sup> Other parts, in contrast, make most of their growth within the actual writing of the speech. Too many components are thus in flux throughout the drafts for any consistent pattern of changes—*insertions, additions, substitutions, deletions, or revisions*—to appear.<sup>9</sup>

#### IV. NATURE OF THE ADJUSTMENTS

These changes have effects on the manuscript of five different types: *relationship, concreteness, force, motivation, and composition*.

*Relationship.* These changes bring out a phase, a connection, or an implication of an idea which the previous phraseology has not

<sup>8</sup> In answer to a question about his "long-range peace objectives," Roosevelt had listed freedom of information, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom from fear; he added freedom from want when the idea was recalled to him by Richard Harkness. *Public Papers of Roosevelt*, IX, pp. 281-285. During the work on the third draft Roosevelt dictated this passage as a suggestion for the peroration. Hopkins questioned American interest in people of distant lands, but agreed with the President that all peoples had now become neighbors. Rosenman, *Roosevelt*, pp. 263-264.

<sup>9</sup> More changes are made in the reworking of the fourth and seventh drafts than in the others; in fact, in the seventh draft there are as many or more of each form than in any other draft.

expressed, such as the historical significance of the idea or its immediacy, or the relationship of people to government and of the American government with other governments. Often these alternations are not matters of finding appropriate expression for ideas so much as of finding the appropriate ideas for expression.

*Concreteness.* These changes provide or strengthen imagery, give localization and specificity. They are concerned with clear expression of ideas.

*Force.* These changes reveal intensity of belief, or deny emphatically any basis for doubt.

*Motivation.* These changes bring out values and affective tone associated with ideas.

*Composition.* These changes introduce or involve the appositive form, prefatory and transitional elements, parallel structure, climax, etc.

Numerous changes of each kind are made throughout the manuscript. Alterations for *concreteness, force* and *motivation*, however, are found less frequently in the final section which includes Roosevelt's declaration of the "four freedoms"; such changes have largely been made prior to the preparation of this manuscript. Of the changes adding *concreteness*, 42.03% take the form of *insertions*. Changes in *composition* occur in great number in all parts of the address: 31.40% are by *deletion*, 30.64% by *revision*.

An analysis of these changes reveals the detailed work done on the discrete elements of the speech.

#### V. RELATIONSHIP

One prominent idea in this address is the uniqueness of the moment, the unusual urgency of the time. Two-thirds of the President's first draft is devoted to setting forth its special nature, closing with the declaration that the country is facing an "unprecedented situation." In the second draft the key word *unprecedented* is moved from the eleventh paragraph to the first sentence

of the address and is made to modify *moment* in the appositional position, "a moment unprecedented." This declaration, with the reason given in the following sentence,<sup>10</sup> initiates the sense of urgency and immediacy which pervades the whole speech.

This atmosphere of immediacy is increased through frequent insertion of the words *now*, *immediate*, and *today*, a process which was still being carried on in the working of the seventh draft. The fight against assailants of the democratic way of life is *now* being carried on in four continents; supplies must go to nations *now* fighting for the democratic cause. America's "most useful role," that of an "arsenal"<sup>11</sup> in the struggle against the dictators, becomes her "most useful *and immediate* role."<sup>12</sup> Into the seventh draft comes a full sentence: "Today, thank God, one hundred and thirty million Americans, in forty-eight States, have forgotten points of the compass in our national unity." Also in the seventh draft a shift in the use of the word *today* deepens the sense of urgency significantly: "*Yesterday's* best is not good enough for *today*" becomes "*Today's* best is not good enough for *tomorrow*."

In addition to the insertion of these words which actually declare the time stringency, there are changes which refer to the swiftness of processes set in motion. That experience was "improv-

ing" the methods of armament production is tinged with urgency in the seventh draft by the added phrase, *and speeding up*. Again in draft seven, after the speech has assumed most of its final form, an insertion adds the sense of swift motion to a statement about the necessity of constructing certain new facilities before production can "flow steadily *and speedily* from them."

It is noteworthy that all of these insertions are being made in a text that had at the outset contained a heavy sprinkling of words like *progress*, *quick*, and had made such declarations as "We are working day and night. . . ."

Sometimes a change focuses on the more immediate aspect of a process; for example, in reference to the possibility of an enemy "sending troops" to the United States, a sense of immediacy is gained by the substitution in the reworking of the sixth draft of the word *landing* for "sending."

Other changes call attention to action in the present by using the progressive verb form: "New circumstances beget constantly new needs for our safety" becomes in draft seven "New circumstances are constantly begetting. . . ." Again, "The mighty action which we call for, cannot be based on a disregard of all things worth fighting for" emphasizes continued time in the present by altering the verb form, "The mighty action which we are calling for. . . ."

Another change emphasizing the present substitutes one specific instance for another: draft six changes the statement declaring that the dictators' "New Order" would be set up "at the point of a gun" to "with the crash of a bomb." Timely realism is here and surprise, and a strong suggestion of sound.

But immediacy of the crisis is not the only time relation developed in the preparation of the manuscript. The claim

<sup>10</sup> "I address you, the Members of the Seventy-seventh Congress, at a moment unprecedented in the history of the Union. I use the word 'unprecedented,' because at no previous time has American security been as seriously threatened from without as it is today."

<sup>11</sup> The term *arsenal* had been used by Roosevelt in his "Arsenal of Democracy" Fireside Chat in the previous December. Authorship of the phrase is variously assigned. Rosenman, *Roosevelt*, pp. 260-261. Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York, 1950), 226.

<sup>12</sup> It is to be noted that all italics within quotations in this paper have been introduced by this writer.

that before 1914 no foreign war "constituted a real threat against us or against any other American nation" is changed to read "constituted a real threat against our future or against the future of any other American nation." Here the lengthening shadow of the disaster is a vivid use of the time element. The time shadow is lengthened differently in regard to the danger of enforced isolation for future generations; "thinking of our children" is amended to read "thinking of our children and their children."

Preoccupation with the time element stretches backward in regard to the effect of the British Navy. That the British Navy "was . . . a friendly strength" is made "has been . . . a friendly strength" and the substituted verb form denotes a continuity of friendship not indicated in the earlier form. And the present existence of the friendship is asserted directly by a further sentence inserted in the reworking of the sixth draft: "It is still a friendly strength."

Thus, the urgent nature of the time and the action it required of the American people is emphasized by changes of several types: by introduction of words indicating the pressure of time and the speed of action, by use of progressive verb forms, and by use of present day examples.

Careful scrutiny of these seven drafts reveals continuing attention given to the matter of recognizing opportunities for clarifying governmental relationships as Roosevelt saw them.<sup>13</sup> For example,

<sup>13</sup> In the Commonwealth Club speech in San Francisco during the campaign of 1932, Roosevelt had explained: "Government includes the art of formulating a policy, and using the political technique to attain so much of that policy as will receive general support; persuading, leading, sacrificing, teaching always, because the greatest duty of a statesman is to educate." *Public Papers of Roosevelt*, I, p. 756. "One of the outstanding accomplishments of

great care is taken to avoid the idea of an autocratic government, to stress the role of the people in an active democracy: the phrase "governed under democratic processes" becomes "governed by democratic processes"; the behest to shame the slackers "by patriotic example" is extended to include forceful means by the declaration, "and, if that fails, to use the sovereignty of government to save government." The suggestion that more of the burden of defense should come from taxation "than we are levying today" becomes less onerous with the substitution "than we are paying today," for the latter speaks of citizen action instead of government assessment, a softening of language doubtless more acceptable to the paying public. And in the sentence which follows, an added phrase gives assurance that the people's welfare is the basis of governmental action: ". . . the principle of tax payments in accordance with ability to pay should be constantly before our eyes to guide our legislation."

In a passage on necessary social improvements, "preservation of civil liberties by all" is changed to "preservation of civil liberties for all," suggesting the maintenance of an atmosphere of brotherhood rather than the performance of individual acts, and reiterating governmental responsibility for the general welfare. An insertion in the sixth draft reminds the Congress with strong alliterative force that the people are the ultimate repository of power: "If the Congress maintains these fundamentals, the voters, putting patriotism ahead of

Roosevelt the statesman was his successful course of educating the American people in the uses of democracy . . ." Rosenman, *Roosevelt*, p. 171. "He was able to explain to the people the most intricate problems of government. He could do it by the use of simple language and by the clear, confident, and persuasive tone of his voice." Rosenman, *Roosevelt*, p. 92.

pocketbooks, will give you their applause."

Roosevelt's concept of the nature of the democratic process is clearly shown through alterations made in the manuscript. The change from the assertion that Congress must "be kept informed" to "rightly keep itself informed" emphasizes the power and responsibility of the legislative branch. That issues are first debated by candidates, then judged by the people, is more accurately represented when the statement, "No issue was fought out on this line *by* the American electorate," becomes "No issue was fought out on this line *before* the American electorate." The continuing nature of party allegiance is recognized when the change from "*without partisanship*, we are all committed to all-out national defense" to "*without regard to partisanship*, we are all committed to all-out national defense" asks not that party allegiance be forsaken but that it be held in abeyance on this issue. An even more effective shift occurs when the term "majorities," used in regard to support of national defense, is changed to "expression of public will." It is, of course, an American tenet that the majority will *is* the public will; whereas the first term suggests the presence of unreconciled majorities, the second takes the democratic step of equating the majority with the public will.

Changes also broaden the coverage of statements, thereby increasing the inclusive reach of the message. For example, the claim that "every member of the Congress faces great responsibility and assumes great accountability" is spread to read "every member of the Executive branch of the government and every member of the Congress." The necessity for "stamina and courage" to be displayed by "those who man our defenses" reaches a wider group by

the addition of civilian workers, "those behind them who build our defenses." Such revisions help to avoid the making of statements which disclose only part of the picture and thus fail to utilize the full significance of a situation. In the list of desired social improvements, for instance, this preventive attention extends the suggestion of "equality of opportunity for youth" with the phrase, "and for others." Again, in the peroration where destiny is spoken of as residing in the people of the nation, the phrase "its millions of free men" gives a more complete and rhetorically strong picture with its added words, "and women."

Faith in the power and purpose of the government is built by changes made, particularly in the final drafts. The claim is made that directing the nation's efforts almost wholly to the foreign threat does not mean forgetfulness of social needs at home "for all our domestic problems are now entangled in the great emergency." In the sixth draft the phrase, "entangled in," is replaced by three simple words, "a part of;" whereas "entangled" infers frustrating complications and little expectation of progress, being "a part of" a movement so strongly endorsed as the armament production program suggests strong possibility of successful solution.<sup>14</sup>

Another example of the elimination of a graphic word occurs in the statement about "the social revolution which is today *convulsing* the world." The word *convulsing* is first neutralized by

<sup>14</sup> Margaret L. Suckley, archivist at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, and relative of the late President, made the following statement in a letter of October 21, 1947, to the writer: "Mr. Roosevelt often expressed the thought that many public speeches and writings (legal documents, etc.) were written in language that the average man could not understand. He said he tried, in his own speeches, to use simple language—'words of two syllables, so to speak'—so that every one would understand what he was talking about."



the substitution of a *fact in*, but later the phrase becomes "*the supreme factor in the world.*" Perhaps this loss of vigor and concreteness better suited the purpose of a President who wished to focus the attention of the public not on the uncomfortable struggles of the "revolution" but on the joyous result to be anticipated.

A tangled idea with good possibilities for making a strong statement of American principles is clarified by shifting the declaration that our country's faith is placed "in the guidance of God under liberty" to "in freedom under the guidance of God." This claim squares with the American concept that "under God the people rule"; it pulls freedom into its appropriate relationship and gives man a job in democracy.

Not only is the relationship of the American citizen with his government involved in many manuscript changes, but also the relationship of the American nation with foreign countries. For example, American relations with England are of concern at three specific points. The example of Norway "whose strategic seaports were captured simultaneously *under the very eyes of the British fleet*" is rephrased, removing indirect criticism of Britain and placing the accusation squarely upon the attackers by substitution of these words, "whose strategic seaports were captured *by treachery and surprise.*" Similarly, the reference to British impressment of our seamen and interference with our trade is eliminated. In both of these cases the change merely avoids bringing up a troublesome attendant issue.

In the third case the elimination of a qualifying word means a loss in strict accuracy. The President's dictated draft had declared that America's foreign policy "has been assisted by the existence of the great and almost at all times

friendly power of the fleets of Great Britain." Rewritten slightly in every draft thereafter except the fifth, the thought persists in its essence until the reworking of the sixth draft strikes out the words "at almost all times." Hence, in its final form, the declaration is made without qualification that "the strength of the British fleet in the Atlantic has been a friendly strength," and further emphasis is added by a new sentence: "It is still a friendly strength." After repeated consideration during the reworking of the drafts, strict accuracy in details may have seemed less important than strong rhetorical effect.

Especially in the presentation of the Lend-Lease plan, changes occur which demonstrate respect for the pride and sovereignty of other nations. Materials which are to be "used by" the democracies at war become in the fourth draft materials "turned over to" these nations, a change indicating greater freedom of operation for the recipients. Later in the manuscript, in opposition to the "schemes of world domination" of the dictators, the third draft poses the American purpose: "*The world domination which we seek is the domination of kind men working together in the service of a common civilization.*" This redefinition within the democratic framework is not allowed to stand, however, for draft four abandons the idea of modifying the stigmatizing term and replaces three elements: "*The international order which we seek is the cooperation of free nations working together in a friendly, civilized world.*" And the fifth draft makes two further minor substitutions: "The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free nations working together in a friendly, civilized *society.*" In this phrasing, connection with the other side of the contrast—the "world domination" of the dictators—is achieved

on the basis of the word *world* rather than of the word *domination*, which latter term, no matter how much conditioned by warm, democratic words, seems alien to the American purpose.

Thus, throughout the work on the different drafts, changes are made which clarify relationships, both those concerned with the immediacy of the dictator threat and the importance of the future welfare, and also those concerned with the citizen's relation to his government and with his country's relation to other nations.

#### VI. CONCRETENESS

Changes that add concreteness in the expression of ideas may do so through such means as providing clearer localization, clearer perception of the physical attributes of an idea, clearer understanding of process.

Many alterations in this address introduce stronger ideas of geographical placement. For example, a sentence which appears for the first time in draft seven is based on a strong space orientation: "Today, thank God, 130 million Americans, in 48 states, have forgotten points of the compass in our national unity."

This sense of placement appears in the specification of location, as in the insert in the sixth draft which designates areas of former American trouble abroad: "a number of undeclared wars in the West Indies, in the Mediterranean and in the Pacific. . . ." When the territories which may be dominated by the aggressors are mentioned, a list, "Europe, Asia, Africa and Australasia," is substituted for the words, "these four continents." The word "Australasia" is here equated with the continent of Australia, although it rightfully designates all the land areas in the south-west quadrant of the Pacific Ocean.

The sense of reality through geographical placement is gained also in the change which alters the metaphor from "any attempt to lock it into an attic room while the procession of civilization goes past the door" to "any attempt to lock us behind an ancient Chinese wall while the procession of civilization went past." Here the change anchors a hypothetical situation in reality.

A similar gain in concreteness is deftly made when the declaration that up to 1914 there was no attempt to get a foothold in this hemisphere is preceded by the phrase, "Except in the Maximilian interlude in Mexico," a phrase noteworthy also for the sureness of touch in its word "interlude" and for the fortunate combination of sounds in its brief compass.

Not only do changes add concreteness through specificity but through more graphic representation of the essence of the idea. Reference to the "*basis* of a healthy and strong democracy" is more physically representational with the substitution of the word *foundations*; whereas *basis* makes the idea clear in an abstract way, *foundations* adds the physical association.

Sometimes a telescoped idea is made more fully perceptible by an insertion which represents the idea more completely. Thus, "neither principles of morality nor considerations for our own security permit a peace" becomes more fully intelligible when an insertion of four words makes the final element read "permit us to acquiesce in a peace." Again, an idea is held up to the light when a passage of great graphic and phonetic power<sup>15</sup> is substituted for two short words: a declaration that social

<sup>15</sup> There are nine [ɪ], five [k], and two [tʃ] sounds in this brief passage. Such repetition has insistent power.

revolution in America goes on "steadily, quietly and kindly" becomes "steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions—without the concentration camp or the quick-lime in the ditch."

Not always is this idea which is clarified a static one; in fact, often the idea itself is one involving movement and vigor, but the alertness has disappeared in the words representing it. In the metaphor about the folly of thinking that "an unprepared America, single-handed, and with one hand tied behind its back, can defeat the whole world," the imagery in general is graphic, but the word *defeat* only vaguely suggests the form of activity. In the seventh draft a simple but much more vigorous expression is substituted and "can *defeat* the whole world" becomes "*can hold off* the whole world."

Vigor likewise enters the characterization of those who are trying to destroy peace in quiet nations when the clause "whose true purpose is" becomes "who *seek*." Elsewhere the word *seek* is itself replaced by one which more effectively portrays the action. "Our help lies open to those who *seek* to gain those rights or keep them" more nearly suggests their vigor and ours in its altered form. "Our support goes to those who *struggle* to gain those rights or keep them." There are three sources of increased energy in the substituted statement: "support" means more dependable assistance than "help;" "goes to" infers assistance quickly on the way whereas "lies open to" suggests the necessity of a request with decision to follow; "struggle" suggests a wrestling with attackers that is lacking in "seek."

Another wholesale substitution patterns the action to which it refers when a vigorous passage declaring that "deadly weapons are now threatening . . ." is replaced by an expression that foregoes

the use of metonymy and directly represents the action: "The assailants are still on the march. . . ."

An inserted element spells out the process of speeding up airplane production: "We are working day and night to catch up" becomes "We are working day and night *to solve the innumerable problems* and to catch up."

This continued attempt to represent the on-going nature of events is seen in many of the changes. An insert in the fourth draft declares: "I shall continue to insist, however, that every person responsible for the carrying out of the program must realize that this improvement cannot be static—that it must continue in every passing day of the future." This sentence, deleted later, is verbal announcement of this sense of vigorous progress which is demonstrated repeatedly in the changes.

This sense of progress reveals itself not only in these continued attempts to choose words that describe activity effectively but in the development undergone by certain ideas between their entrance into the manuscript and their appearance in the Reading Copy. The evolution of the sentence concerning the friendliness of the British Navy has been noted. Similar growth takes place in reference to the people in charge of the defense program who were first declared to represent "as good ability, training and experience as can be found in the country" are later said to represent "the best in training, ability and patriotism." The development from "as good . . . as" to "the best" shows the shift in ideas during the preparation of the address; furthermore, the substitution of the active, praise-evoking word "patriotism" for the everywhere word "experience" shows the addition of color to thought.

Entering in the second draft, a state-

ment claims that American citizens "show substantial unity" in their demand for action against the threat of aggression; in the reworking of draft four the statement strengthens, declaring that the citizens "are almost completely united." In draft five the word "almost" is struck out and the affirmation stands unqualified, "American citizens everywhere are completely united. . . ." Although revision in the sixth draft eliminates this element now matured, thus achieving greater directness and bypassing the question of unanimity of opinion, yet here again an idea has been stated with fewer and fewer qualifications as the drafts have succeeded one another across the President's desk. Again, accuracy of report has been sacrificed for a greater strength and totality of effect.

This alteration of thought during the preparation of the speech may take the form of a growing certainty of belief, as is shown in the shift from "I hope that none of us will be beguiled . . ." to "In fulfillment of this purpose we will not be intimidated . . ." Similar stiffening of attitude is shown in the changes in regard to American "soft-headedness." At first the text reads, "Most of us may admit soft-headedness but we resent the charge of soft-headedness"; then the latter element becomes "but we are loath to confess to soft-headedness." Finally, the whole assertion is changed to: "As a nation we may take pride in the fact that we are soft-hearted; but we cannot afford to be soft-headed."

Even a direct quotation is not immune from change under the impact of repeated consideration. The author's name is omitted and words within the sentence are changed, the most important alteration being the substitution of the word "purchase" for "obtain." The

original sentence, brought in by an insert in the fifth draft, declares: "In the words of Benjamin Franklin, 'They that give up liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.'" This quotation omits two of Franklin's words: "can" before "give" and "essential" before "liberty."<sup>16</sup> The sixth draft restores the word "essential," but introduces further distortion<sup>17</sup> so that the sentence comes to read: "*Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.*" Although these modifications may phrase the idea more appropriately for Roosevelt, it may be seriously questioned whether the omission of due credit to Franklin is thereby justified.

Thus, frequent changes throughout the drafts bring greater concreteness to the text through increased sense of locality, through better representation of physical attributes and of process. Not only do these changes more adequately show action in its vividness, but some of the ideas being expressed attain greater definiteness through loss of qualification.

## VII. FORCE

Ideas gain strength of expression by substitution of more forceful terms and more emphatic verb forms, by insertion of vigorous elements, and by shift to more significant points of view.

The declaration that morale was be-

<sup>16</sup> "This sentence was much used in the Revolutionary period. It occurs even so early as November, 1775, in an answer by the Assembly of Pennsylvania to the Governor, and forms the motto of Franklin's 'Historical Review,' 1759, appearing also in the body of the work." Richard Frothingham, *Rise of the Republic of the United States* (Boston, 1910), p. 413.

<sup>17</sup> The comma is inserted in the reworking of the sixth draft, doubtless as an aid in reading. "He paid a great deal of attention to the punctuation not for its correctness but for its aid or hindrance to him in reading the speech aloud." Sherwood, *Roosevelt*, p. 217.



ing undermined in yet peaceful nations "by secret spreading of poisonous ideas" is increased in its power by changing the word "ideas" to "propaganda." This substitution brings alliteration of explosive force in addition to the stronger characterization.

The clause, "who preach the gospel of appeasement," hands its Biblical flavor to an inserted phrase, "with sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal," and strengthens its denunciatory effect with the substitution of a scrap of a word, "ism," for the word, "gospel." Thus, a strong statement emerges: "We must always be wary of those who with sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal preach the 'ism' of appeasement."

Inserted elements of various types add strength. They may further characterize, as is done when the "new order" is labelled the "new order of tyranny." They may enforce a contrast, as when the declaration that our adversaries will make the decisions about the attack becomes "they—not we—will choose . . ." They may substitute the emphatic form of the verb, as in the revision of the sentence following the declaration that "they do not need man power," when "*They need* to order and to get delivery of billions of dollars worth of the weapons of defense."

Altering the approach to an idea may add strength, as when "there was small division between the two great parties" becomes "there was no substantial difference." Again, in regard to the nation's attitude toward its job of armament building, "we ought not be satisfied," gains strength with the individualizing of the claim, "None of us will be satisfied. . . ." Sometimes an omission of a single word changes the point of view, as when "from an *unshakeable belief* in the manner of life which we are defending" loses the article and increases

its scope: "from unshakeable belief. . . ."

Although force is doubtless also increased indirectly through changes which clarify relationships in thought and through those which add concreteness to the expression of ideas, primarily power is heightened directly through certain substitutions, insertions and deletions in the building of the Reading Copy.

#### VIII. MOTIVATION

Clearly many of the changes previously considered are strong in motivative effect. Those alterations which convey more vividly the urgency of the situation and the vigor of the American response appeal to pride and the desire for self-preservation. Those which spell out the future for America and the world bespeak hope. Those which overlook divergent elements and hindering qualifications are reassuring. Those which praise the patriots and denounce the slackers challenge the citizen to range himself within the approved group. In addition, much is done to increase the motivative power of the manuscript by changes which personalize the ideas expressed and which assign praise and blame more forceably.

Frequent use of first person pronouns increases the affective power of the speech. Into a manuscript which already contains sixty uses of the word "our" is introduced another use in the seventh draft: "*the* objective is quicker and better results" becomes "*our* objective is quicker and better results." Elsewhere in the seventh draft, the word "our" is brought in at three points in one sentence. Such substitution in a speech having also fifty-two uses of the word "we" indicates a sustained attempt to tie the ideas of the address in closely with the wishes and welfare of the American people.

A more specific emotional state is at

times called forth through the change, as in the substitution of "poisonous" for "unAmerican" in a passage speaking of the danger to democratic life through "the secret spreading of un-American ideas," or in the substitution of "appalling" for "amazing" in regard to the number of independent nations which have lost their democratic life to the aggressors.

Sometimes the alteration adds emotional content where little or none had been present, as in the report about the production totals. The declaration that in some phases production was "up to schedule" is changed to "on schedule" with a gain in the sense of sureness. Again, a brief insertion adds to the feeling of common enlistment in a cause: "American citizens everywhere are demanding *and supporting* speedy and complete action."

Changes which add indication of approval and commendation are frequent. In an early draft, for example, it is declared that American aid to "all peoples" now fighting against the dictators; the phrase becomes "those brave and resolute peoples" and then simply "those resolute peoples." In the final sentence of the address the addition of emotional content through the word "high" plus the attendant change in accentuation in the shift from "conception" to "concept" greatly increases the power of the sentence: "*To that conception* there can be no end save victory" becomes "*To that high concept* there can be no end save victory."<sup>18</sup>

Changes also indicate denunciation, as in the introduction of the word "dupes" for those Americans who fall prey to the "invaders," and in the in-

sertion which refers to "that small group of selfish men who would clip the wings of the American eagle in order to feather their own nests." A sense of deep concern is added by a direct personal statement inserted relative to the slowness of production in certain cases: "and I am sorry to say very important cases."

In addition to personalization, intensification of feeling and characterization through praise or blame, affirmative attitudes are built in the listeners by the spelling out of commonly desired goals. For example, in the sentence preceding Roosevelt's declaration of the "four freedoms," the phrase "in that future" is expanded by the insertion of the goal, "In the future days *which we seek to make secure*. . . ." Also, in the passage concerning previous American engagements with foreign adversaries, an addition declares the upright nature of our efforts: "for the maintenance of American rights and for the principles of peaceful commerce." Such statements are familiar and dear to American ears.

Perhaps all changes made in the manuscript have some contribution to the motivative power of the whole, for they seek by their addition of clarity, force, concreteness or direct emotional impact to enlist all citizens further in the common effort.

## IX. COMPOSITION

Adjustments of compositional nature provide for climax, for appropriate focus and flow of thought, for conciseness, for alliteration and parallelism, for transition, and for other changes attendant upon these.

Certain changes place the climax in more advantageous position. In two instances a "to—from" relationship is reversed so that the present condition is

<sup>18</sup> "Sometimes Roosevelt read the speech out loud, to see how it sounded, for every word was judged not by its appearance in print but by its effectiveness over the radio." Sherwood, *Roosevelt, Ibid.*, p. 215.

given the climatic position.<sup>19</sup> In another sentence the *result*—*means* order becomes *means*—*result*, thus putting the American aspect of the problem in the final position.<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere a localizing phrase is deleted to leave the emphatic element unencumbered in the sentence ending: "That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb in *Europe and Asia*."

Focus on certain words is variously achieved. It is secured by repeated insertion of the article *the*, as in the sentence, ". . . they—not we—will choose the time and *the* place and *the* method." Lengthening the introductory element affords stronger focus on the declaration to follow: "*Soon* they will not be able to pay for them in ready cash" becomes "*The time is near* when they will not be able to pay for them in ready cash." Deletion of distracting elements allows greater focus, as in the elimination of

the word *great*: "The *great* need of the moment is that our actions and our policy should be devoted primarily—almost exclusively—to meeting this foreign peril."

Sometimes an element that holds the attention overlong from the main point of the idea is deleted: ". . . our friends who by their gallant resistance are giving us *a period of grace, a breathing spell*, in which to make ready our own defenses" becomes ". . . our friends who by their determined and heroic resistance are giving us *time* in which to make ready our own defense." On the other hand, an inserted word may hold the idea previously expressed up to longer consideration before admitting the following element. The introduction of *so* performs this function in what would otherwise be a rather weak closing for a strong sentence: "Such aid is not an act of war, even if a dictator should unilaterally proclaim it *so* to be." Retrospective power is gained by the insertion of *alike*: "We are thus able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions without fear" becomes "A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions *alike* without fear."

Not only focus, but simple directness, is achieved by deletion of mid-sentence complications, as in "These are the simple and basic things that *we must ever strive to further and which must never be lost sight of*. . . ." Again, the sentence, "People in charge of *producing the results of the program*. . ." becomes "The men in charge of the program. . . ."

Elements at the beginning of a sentence are deleted with consequently greater directness, as in "*As we continue to muster all that we have in this great cause*, we must all prepare. . ." and in the peroration, "*One hundred and*

<sup>19</sup> "No realistic American can expect international generosity or return of true independence, or world disarmament, or freedom of expression, or freedom of religion—or even good business—from *victorious dictatorships*" becomes "No realistic American can expect *from a dictator's peace* international generosity or return of true independence, or world disarmament, or freedom of expression, or freedom of religion—or even good business." The swift turn to practical considerations in the reference to "good business" is lost in the earlier phrasing but stands as an emphatic closing in the revised form.

"To change a whole nation to a basis of *war time production of implements of war*, from a basis of *peacetime production of implements of peace* is no small task" becomes "To change a whole nation from a basis of *peacetime production of implements of peace, to a basis of war time production of implements of war*, is no easy task." The forward movement is much more evident in this revision.

<sup>20</sup> In the correction of the fifth draft ". . . we are committed to 'all-out' aid to those resolute peoples everywhere, who are now keeping war away from our Hemisphere by *brave resistance against the aggressors*" becomes ". . . we are committed to 'all-out' support of all those resolute peoples everywhere, *who are resisting aggression* and are thereby keeping war away from our Hemisphere."

fifty-three years ago this nation placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men. . . ." Such deletions occur also at the end of sentences: for example, in the elimination of the appositional diffusive element: "Those things have . . . strengthened their devotion to the institutions we make ready to protect—*have made a free people ever more willing and ready to defend their freedom.*" It should be noted that similar elements have elsewhere been introduced or preserved with consequent value in clarity, common identification with the goal, and so on.

Sometimes mere rephrasing brings greater directness, as in the change from "We are *behind hand in the goal for the actual turning out of finished airplanes . . .*" to "We are *behind schedule in turning out finished airplanes . . .*" In the matter of providing opportunities for gainful employment, a twenty-eight word sentence is replaced by a seventeen-word one.

Alliteration is introduced by insertions, as in "perpetual *peaceful* revolution" and the change from "faith in the guidance of God under *liberty*" to "faith in *freedom* under the guidance of God." In one sentence excessive alliterative effect is reduced by deletion of the word *fundamentally*: "In the future days which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded *fundamentally* upon four essential human freedoms."

When in the preparation of the manuscript a list of factors begins to emerge, the parts are cast in similar form. The "everywhere in the world" refrain of the four freedoms declaration is well known; this effective parallelism emerged through only slight alteration

of Roosevelt's dictated version.<sup>21</sup> In the listing of the basic social and economic expectations, the six items are revised into roughly parallel form:

Equality of opportunity . . .  
Jobs for those who can work.  
Security for those who need it.  
The ending of special privilege . . .  
The preservation of civil liberties . . .  
The enjoyment of the fruits of scientific progress . . .

Elsewhere, the examples of necessary improvement in the social economy are revised to start similarly: "We should bring. . . . We should widen. . . . We should plan. . . ." The three elements of our national policy are through successive revisions cast into similar form, beginning, "First, by an impressive expression of the public will and without regard to partisanship, we are committed to. . . ." In three other instances in the manuscript sentences are made parallel for at least the first three words.

Thus, parallelism develops as the manuscript grows; more appositional elements also appear as the sentences undergo repeated revision. Appositive form is used to restate an idea impressively, as in "In like fashion from 1815 to 1914—*ninety-nine years*—no single war. . . ." It may repeat a term for further modification; for example, "I do not recommend that we make them a loan of dollars with which to pay for these weapons—a *loan* to be repaid in dollars." Appositional form also provides specific elements with a more general framework, as in the introduction of the phrase *in change* in a strong sentence near the close of the address: "Since the beginning of our American history, we have been engaged *in change*

<sup>21</sup> Change of the word *international* to *world* in the third and fourth statements, and shifting of the words *everywhere* and *anywhere* in the third and fourth parts to the end of the sentences with the phrase *in the world* added—these are the only revisions.



—in a perpetual peaceful revolution—a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions. . . ."

As the preparation of the manuscript continues, transitional elements are provided; the words *and, for, therefore*, are inserted at sentence beginnings to clarify relationships. Retrospective force is also gained by alteration to repeat words used in the preceding paragraph, as when "fundamentals" gives way to "principles" and "to it" becomes "to that 'new order.'"

Adjustments also facilitate the flow of thought. "*The Army and Navy have, however, made substantial progress during the past year . . . points more specifically to these branches of the service with but a slight alteration. 'The Army and Navy, however, have made substantial progress during the past year. . . .'*" Again, words which tend to halt the movement of the sentence without reason are reversed in position: "new assembly lines and ship ways *must be first constructed*" becomes "new assembly lines and ship ways *must first be constructed.*" When, in another instance, alterations in the body of a sentence increase the possibility of its forceful utterance, the final phrase *of attack* is deleted, but is reentered in the succeeding draft to read: ". . . they—not we—will choose the time and the place and the method *of their attack.*" The phrase seems to serve a tapering-off purpose.

Minor adjustments are necessary in consequence of these changes. Thus, "in recognition of recognized danger" becomes "in recognition of obvious danger"; and "that kind of a world" rightly becomes "that kind of world."

Thus, in the building of the Reading Copy, some larger passages are collapsed into few sentences or deleted entirely, whereas other brief tags of thought are

expanded and assume great importance. Some elements survive as first introduced, others undergo repeated adjustment. Indeed, again and again the whole developing structure is submitted to careful scrutiny: ideas are sharpened, expression is invigorated, structure is welded to thought.

On the other hand, ideas with significant use of concrete imagery, alliteration, forceful and affective expression are deleted in the fifth and sixth drafts. Since the major entrance and exit of blocks of material took place in the second, third and fourth drafts, only with the fifth draft does the true shape of the address begin to appear. Then comes the inevitable task of shortening the manuscript further, and elements that have stood the test to this point are now eliminated.<sup>22</sup> For example, a sentence making use of alliteration and embodying a strong sense of immediacy appears as an insert in the second draft but is deleted in the reworking of the sixth:

We must have a national identity of aims, purposeful and passionate, directed to creating the most immediate, the most effective answer to the challenge which is being made to our civilization.

A strong simile enters in the third draft but is deleted in the correction of the fifth:

To do so would be like refusing to furnish medicine in a raging epidemic to those who could not afford immediately to pay for it, forgetting that the epidemic itself will spread further and further unless it can be stopped by the medicine we have in our possession.

A passage with short, alliterative, pungent sentences appears in the reworking

<sup>22</sup> "In the final draft of a speech, every word was counted and Roosevelt finally decided the precise number that he would be able to crowd into thirty minutes. . . . This cutting was the most difficult work of all because by the time we had come to the ninth or tenth draft, we felt sure the speech had been boiled down to the ultimate monosyllable." Sherwood, *Roosevelt*, p. 217.

of the fifth draft, but is eliminated in the correction of the sixth:

This is no time for complacency.

This is no time for fear or faltering.

The hour requires candor and courage. The American people will not flinch from the truth nor from that action on the truth which alone makes and keeps men free.

These elements and others, revealing many of the qualities developed by constant revision in the sentences finally used, are nevertheless eliminated in the last stages of preparation.

This study of the changes in the building of the manuscript has given attention to the formulation of individual parts and briefly to the adjustments made to supply transitional elements. The cumulative effect of these sentences—built to express Roosevelt's concepts of governmental function and relationship, shifted to place the climactic idea in the climactic position, altered and trimmed to add force and effect by the very words chosen—is powerful indeed. Considering that the first wording of the ideas was done by writers with long training on scores of earlier addresses and thus the first sentences embodied much of the style desired,<sup>23</sup> considering that each sentence, each word, underwent severe scrutiny not only in itself but in the light of changes made elsewhere in the address, one begins to understand the power of the final draft.

After the painstaking work on the manuscript, there is no doubt that the President needed little prompting from the text as he spoke to the Congress on January 6, 1941. Nevertheless, certain characteristics of paragraphing and

punctuation in the Reading Copy are brought into being by revision of the drafts. For example, indications for additional paragraph divisions appear at thirty-five points in the drafts. And, in the final form, the 143 sentences are typed triple-space into 78 paragraphs, which thus average less than two (1.83) sentences each.

Dashes appear at thirty points in the Reading Copy, eight of these having been introduced as specific punctuation changes. In contrast, seven semicolons are converted through the reworking of the drafts into periods and one into a comma; only seven appear in the final 143 sentences. There is no use of parentheses.<sup>24</sup>

#### X. SUMMARY

Seven drafts—starting with five pages dictated by Roosevelt as the first draft, expanding significantly in the second, accomplishing the major movements of material by the fifth, undergoing repeated alteration for meaning, implication and form in all drafts but especially the final ones—were prepared in the evolution of the "four freedoms" speech.

Study of these drafts does not reveal the work done by Roosevelt's staff in checking the exactness of the data and the strategic desirability of the inferences; however, it does reveal the nature and prodigious amount of careful thought given to providing the text by which Roosevelt would make the chosen ideas known to the Congress and the nation.

In this evolution of the "four freedoms" speech there are more substitutions than additions, insertions, deletions, or revisions. The appositional form is frequently introduced, of adject-

<sup>23</sup> "There was something about working with the President on speeches, something about listening to him deliver them, something about listening to him dictate paragraphs time and again, that seemed unconsciously to color our style and manner of writing. . . . All those who worked on speeches for any length of time came gradually and unconsciously to be able to imitate the President's style—some, of course, better than others." Rosenman, p. 233.

<sup>24</sup> "He liked dashes, which were visual aids, and hated semicolons and parentheses." Sherwood, *Roosevelt*, p. 217.

tives as well as nouns. Much alliteration and parallelism are developed; many changes involve climax and focus. Paragraphs average less than two sentences in length in the Reading Copy; many dashes are introduced, and few semicolons are allowed to remain. Readability is further aided by certain uses of the comma.

In retrospect it appears that in the preparation of this manuscript continued efforts were made in three principal directions:

1. *To establish and maintain the precise tone desired for the address.*

2. *To develop the universal aspect of events.* Conditions and qualifications were gradually eliminated so that statements became more and more categorical; declarations that might carry unintended slights were eliminated, and lists that might bring hurt by omission were made inclusive. Thus, the speech was refined to set forth the "eternal simplicities" so strongly believed in by Roosevelt.

3. *To build the strongest verbal and syn-*

*tactical instrument possible for expression of these ideas and attitudes.*

This manuscript was prepared for delivery before the Congress of the United States, but there is no doubt that it was addressed also to the entire country and to the world. Furthermore, it was prepared for delivery by a speaker who would be reacting powerfully to each idea, raising each one to its fullness of meaning and implication by his warm sense of personal communication and his high degree of vocal responsiveness. Thus, no effort was spared to so phrase each idea as to permit such vibrant translation.

Not only from the manner of its preparation but also from the conditions of its presentation, the manuscript is an extended series of carefully developed elements, each contributing to the tone and message of the whole but having its own individual excellence as well.

## TEMPORAL ASPECTS OF BREATHING IN SUPERIOR READING AND SPEAKING PERFORMANCES\*

JOHN C. SNIDECOR  
*University of California  
Santa Barbara College*

OVER twenty experimental studies of breathing in speech and song have been primarily concerned with such matters as the general region of breathing, depth of beathing, and analytical studies of the relative part played by various portions of the breathing mechanism. A careful review of literature in the field indicates that this research was developed in large part to test, support or negate traditional pedagogical concepts in regard to "where" one should breathe, and the quantity of inhaled air essential to the support of effective phonation.

This experimenter takes the view that data relative to the temporal aspects of breathing in superior speakers and readers may be of equal descriptive value to those data from location and volume studies. It is more than incidental that from the practical pedagogic view temporal relationships established by superior performers may be taught to less effective speakers in the classroom or clinic situation.

The purpose of this experiment is to establish time measurements of central tendency and variability for superior performance of oral reading and impromptu speaking.

### I. SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

Five subjects were selected from a representative group of twelve superior readers and speakers enrolled in ad-

vanced status in the Department of Speech of San Diego State College. The final selection of three male and two female speakers was made by three experienced criterion judges who auditioned both reading and speaking performances. The procedure utilized was similar to that described by Fairbanks<sup>1</sup> and Snidecor.<sup>2</sup>

Two exceptions to the selection procedure, as described, should be noted. First, in this experiment especial attention was given to intelligibility of speech in order that conclusions might be related to practical communication problems. Second, relative normality of mouth and jaw structure was insured in order that the same subjects might be utilized in another experiment unrelated to this one.

Subsequent to the initial selection procedure and recording of the subjects, three additional criterion judges independently ranked the five speakers, auditioning high quality tape recordings for this purpose. The judges agreed that the reading and speaking performances were highly intelligible, and highly acceptable in such other characteristics as quality, pitch and rate (including phrasing). The group was homogeneous in performance which would be anticipated from the selection procedure.

<sup>1</sup> Grant Fairbanks, "Recent Experimental Investigations of Vocal Pitch in Speech," *Jour. of the Acoustic Society of America*, XI (1940), 457-460.

<sup>2</sup> John C. Snidecor, "A Comparative Study of Pitch and Duration Characteristics of Impromptu Speaking and Oral Reading," *Speech Monographs*, 10 (1943), 50-56.

\*Data for this study were obtained while the author was on sabbatical leave at the Human Factors Division of the Navy Electronics Laboratory, San Diego, California.



## II. EQUIPMENT

In order to obtain accurate breathing records a lightweight electric pneumograph was devised, the belt of which consisted of a plastic strap adjustable for chest size. On the front of the pneumograph a low tension coil spring actuated a lever attached to the rotating shaft of a 3,500 ohm potentiometer. Chest expansion and contraction varied the position of the potentiometer shaft, thus changing the amplitude of a sixty cycle current which was fed to a Brush Amplifier, and thence to one pen of a Brush two pen recorder. Tape velocity was 25 mm per second. The use of sixty cycle current supplied a superimposed time line on the breathing record. Periodic checks of the time line indicated that velocity error never exceeded one per cent.

A speech line was imposed on the lower position of the tape from a crystal microphone that led into a Magnacord PT6-JA voice recorder. This impulse was taken from the monitor jack of the Magnacord and rectified by means of a selenium rectifier. The resulting speech envelope was led to a Brush Amplifier and thence to the second pen of the Brush recorder.

A simultaneous acoustical recording of the reading and speaking performances was imposed on the magnetic tape of the Magnacord recorder.

The time records of breathing and speech were inked on Brush continuous chart, No. BL-909, which is imprinted with lines vertical to the axis of the tape. These lines are .50 centimeters apart, allowing for direct time measurements. It was found more convenient and accurate to devise and use a measuring ruler calibrated directly in units of seconds and decimal values thereof rather than to utilize the calibrations on the chart itself.

The equipment as described proved to be satisfactory in supplying accurate time measurements of voice and breathing. The voice recordings supplied data essential for validating the quality of the performances, for spotting words on the time record, and for establishing phrase limits.

For experiments of this type the electrical pneumograph is considered superior to the older air driven variety in both lightness of weight and controlled sensitivity. The advantages of electrical equipment appear to outweigh disadvantages encountered in assembling and balancing it.

## III. READING AND SPEAKING PERFORMANCES

Because of their excellent composition, and previous use in similar research, two reading passages were chosen from *Voice and Articulation Drillbook* by Fairbanks.<sup>3</sup> Both the "Rainbow Passage" and the "Reading Rate" passage insured normal phrase and word length. The "Reading Rate" passage makes feasible comparisons in rate based on norms secured by Darley<sup>4</sup> on a large number of college readers.

The impromptu speaking assignment given each subject was "My Future Job." Fifteen minutes were allowed for preparation. Notes were not allowed. In general, both reading and speaking were performed as described by Snidecor.<sup>5</sup>

Both reading and speaking performances were executed using the equipment described above and "as if to an audience of thirty people."

Criterion judges also defined the spoken phrase in essentially the same

<sup>3</sup> Grant Fairbanks, *Voice and Articulation Drillbook* (New York, 1940), pp. 144, 168.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick L. Darley, "A Normative Study of Oral Reading Rate," M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1940.

<sup>5</sup> Snidecor, SM, 10 (1943), 50-51.

manner described by Snidecor,<sup>6</sup> except that both reading and speaking performances were so judged. The directions were as stated below:

#### *Directions to Judges*

I am asking you to participate in a procedure which I hope will enable me to define a spoken phrase objectively in reference to the readings and speeches under consideration. Instead of asking you for a verbal definition, I am asking that you define by example.

You will be furnished with records of speaking performances and copies of the material recorded. The records will be played as many times as you wish. Indicate how you think the material was phrased by the speaker by indicating the limits of each phrase with clear vertical lines.

In order that this experiment will be valid, you must disregard how you think the selection should be phrased. Consider only phrasing as you hear it from the records. Do not attempt to punctuate the material.

#### *Rating of Speakers*

Please rate each speaker on a seven point scale on which 1 represents inferior and 7 represents superior. Because of the fact that these are selected speakers it will be desirable to think in terms of spreading the scale somewhat more than would be done in a classroom situation.

The relation of breathing and phrasing was computed for both passages as was the relation of breathing and punctuation for the reading passage only.

A. *Results.* A general understanding of breathing in the reading performance can be gathered from the passage below.<sup>7</sup> Each oblique line represents where three out of the five performers breathed while reading aloud.

Your rate of speech will be adequate if it is slow enough to provide for clearness and comprehension, and rapid enough to sustain interest. Your rate is faulty if it is too rapid to accomplish these ends. The easiest way to begin work on the adjustment of your speech to an ideal rate is to measure your

present rate in words per minute in a fixed situation which you can keep constant over a number of trials. The best method is to pick a page of simple, factual prose to be read. Read this page in your natural manner, timing yourself in seconds. Count the number of words on the page, divide by the number of seconds, and multiply this result by sixty to calculate the number of words per minute. As you attempt to increase or retard your rate, repeat this procedure from time to time, using the same reading material, to enable you to check your success.

"A common accompaniment of rapid rate is staccato speech, in which the duration of words and syllables is too short, whereas in slow speech the words and syllables frequently are over-prolonged. When the person with too rapid rate tries to slow down, he tends to make the error of keeping the duration of his tones short, and of attempting to accomplish the slower rate solely by lengthening the pauses between phrases and by introducing new pauses. On the other hand, the person who is working to speed up his rate tends to do this by shortening the pauses alone and retaining his prolonged tones. It is impossible at the present time to set down in rules the ideal relation between the duration of tones and pauses in speech. Further research is needed before this can be done with any great accuracy.

The breathing pattern for one impromptu speaking performance can be observed from a portion of the speech presented below:

I SHOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU WHY I HAVE CHOSEN THE PROFESSION OF COLLEGE PROFESSOR. IN THE FIELD OF SPEECH ARTS WHEN I BEGAN MY COLLEGE CAREER AS A FRESHMAN I HAD NO IDEA THAT I WOULD EVER GET INTO COLLEGE. TEACHING I HAD PLANNED TO TAKE THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S CURRICULUM AND BECOME A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER. BUT AS THE MONTHS AND YEARS ROLLED BY MY INTEREST IN RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF SPEECH AND PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF INTERPRETATION AS IT APPLIES TO THE DRAMATIC FIELD INCREASED AND I DECIDED THAT THE ONLY PLACE TO FULFILL THAT INTEREST IN RESEARCH WAS IN COLLEGE AND THE MOST OBVIOUS WAY WOULD BE TO BECOME A COLLEGE

<sup>6</sup> John C. Snidecor, "An Objective Study of Phrasing in Impromptu Speaking and Oral Reading," SM, 11 (1944) 97-104.

<sup>7</sup> Fairbanks, *Drillbook*, p. 144.

PROFESSOR/AND STUDY SPEECH ON THAT LEVEL/THE INTEREST IN INTERPETATION FROM THE DRAMATIC STANDPOINT/DERIVES FROM A FEELING I HAVE HAD THAT INTERPRETATION IN COLLEGES HAS BEEN STUDIED/FOR ITSELF AND FOR ITSELF ONLY/AND THAT THIS WAS WRONG THAT INTERPRETATION LITERATURE/ESPECIALLY WAS SO INHERENTLY RELATED TO THE FIELD OF DRAMATICS/THAT IT WAS ABSURD TO STUDY IT ON ITS INDIVIDUAL BASIS/THAT IT ACTUALLY HAD NO MEANING UNLESS IT WAS TREATED FROM A DRAMATIC STANDPOINT/

B. *Rate.* The rate in words per minute for both reading and speaking ranged from 142 to 188, falling within the norms established by Franke<sup>8</sup> for oral reading with the exception of the one reading performance of 188 words per minute which would, according to Franke, be judged as too rapid, and which would fall approximately at Darley's 90th percentile. The mean value for the reading of 169.7 words per minute place this performance at his 60th percentile. There was no significant difference between the mean rates for reading and speaking.

C. *Breathing and Punctuation, Reading Only.* Although the sentence was a relatively consistent guide to breathing, some of the speakers did not at all times breathe at periods, yet gave adequate pauses at the end of sentences. Commas were utilized as breath stops much less consistently than were periods. Of 26 commas, 5 were not utilized for breath stops by any of the speakers, 6 were utilized by one speaker, 2 by two speakers, 6 by three speakers, 3 by four speakers and 5 by five speakers.

Breathing stops at other than punctuation points are, in general, not consis-

tent. Two exceptions may be noted. Three of the five speakers breathed after the first "rate" in the sentence: "The easiest way to begin work on the adjustment of your speech to an ideal rate is to measure your present rate in words per minute in a fixed situation which you keep constant over a number of trials." Three of the five speakers breathed following the word "phrases" in the sentence, "When the person with too rapid rate tries to slow down, he tends to make the error of keeping the duration of his tones short, and of attempting to accomplish the slower rate solely by lengthening the pauses between phrases and by introducing the new pauses." It will be noted that both sentences are long and appeared to require a breath stop aside from those indicated by punctuation. The second sentence is not only long, but is complete without the addition of the prepositional phrase beginning with "and." A breath stop appears logical at this point.

Despite certain inconsistencies, 85.5 per cent of all breathing stops occurred at punctuation marks, and a number of the non-punctuation breath stops occurred to break long sentences, especially where a non-punctuated adverbial phrase was encountered.

D. *Breathing and Judged Phrases.* When breath stops are related to judgments of oral phrases ( $N=522$ ) as described above, it is found that 73 per cent of judged phrases fall at breath stops. Twenty-seven per cent of breaths taken occur outside of phrase limits. These stops are brief, not judged as phrases, yet show up clearly on the pneumograph record. Later analysis of breath cycle length and words per breath indicated that many of these stops were unnecessary. Analysis of a reading passage for breath stops prior to performance would probably serve to eliminate

<sup>8</sup> Phyllis E. Franke, "Study of the Rate of Speech in Words Per Minute and Relation to Judgments of Rate," M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1939.

useless stops for breath and improve oral reading. Such an analysis for impromptu speaking would obviously not be possible.

E. *The Length of the Breathing Cycle and Speech Cycle.* The length of the breathing cycle and speech cycle which extends from the completion of one inhalation to the completion of the next inhalation extends over a mean period of 4.185 seconds for reading and 3.992 seconds for speaking. The difference is not statistically significant. Marked variability in cycle lengths is demonstrated by one short cycle at 1.25 seconds and one long cycle at 9.95 seconds. SD values cluster around 1.5 seconds. The duration of continuous speech, without inhalation, is 3.377 seconds for reading and 3.142 for speaking with variability comparable to that for the breath cycle. The differences are not statistically significant.

F. *Duration of Inspiration at Breath Stops.* Duration of inspiration at breath stops tends to vary with the length of the pause which, of course, is frequently related to phrasing. Examination of the pneumograph record indicates that a breath may be taken leisurely in as much as 2.29 seconds or as quickly as .40 seconds with mean values for the five speakers ranging from .75 to .94 seconds. Generally speaking, the longer the inspiration the greater the length of the subsequent speaking cycle.

G. *The Number of Words Per Breath.* The number of words per breath, especially for reading, is probably the most important information in this study when such information is sensibly related to punctuation. The mean number of words per breath in reading is 12.54 (Sigma = 4.89) and in speaking 10.59 (Sigma = 5.31). Of the many statistical comparisons made in this study

these figures represent the only statistically significant difference. With a  $t$  value of 3.06 for eight degrees of freedom there is significance at the 1 per cent level.

Properly interpreted, this means that breathing performances are alike for reading and speaking for both men and women with the exception of words per breath. Even here effective individual speakers vary enough to assume safely that the mean values for either reading or speaking will serve as a partial guide to effective performance.

Variability in words per breath was marked. All speakers had short cycles encompassing from 2 to 8 words. All speakers had long cycles ranging from 17 to 36 words per breathing cycle. SD values for individual speakers range from 3.38 to 6.19.

A clear, but not extreme bi-modality in words per breath is shown when distributions are drawn for both reading and speaking. Most short cycles in reading fall at 7 words, and in speaking at 9 words per breath. The longer cycles in reading for both reading and speaking cluster at 14 words per breath.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. The rate in words per minute, with the exception of one performance, fell within the desirable limits established by other studies.
2. At least for well written materials, periods and commas serve as suitable guides for breathing, if phrase limits do not markedly exceed the median figures stated above. At times, especially in long sentences, non-punctuated phrases will serve as breath stops.
3. When the "judged oral phrase" is considered, 73 per cent of such phrases will fall at breath stops.
4. The mean breathing cycle for reading was 4.2 seconds, and for speaking



4.0 seconds. There is marked variability in cycle length.

5. Duration of inspiration varies from less than .5 to more than 2 seconds.

6. For reading there were, mean values considered, 12.5 words spoken per breath, and in speaking 10.6 words per breath. The difference is statistically significant. Words per breath in both performances are bi-modally distributed with a peak at 7 to 9 words per breath and another at 14 words per breath.

#### V. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Results are applicable only to materials to be read, and then sensible interpretation is necessary. Seven to 9 words is a short, practical phrase, and can be so marked. The large number of phrases at 14 words per breath indicate that these superior speakers probably favored this span of words per breath in both reading and speaking. To be sure, phrase length was influenced by the nature of

the written materials, but not in the case of the impromptu speeches. These figures by no means represent the extreme for effective performance as 28 words per phrase were spoken clearly and with seeming ease in several performances.

In a practical speech improvement situation the writer recommends the use of punctuation as a guide with most phrases held within the limits of 7 to 14 words with occasional breath cycles extending to 24 to 28 words.

Classroom and clinical observation indicates that a substantial number of "poor breathers" who analyze materials to be read and perform in keeping with their analysis improve their breath support. This procedure, however practical it may be, is no panacea for such faulty voice qualities as breathiness. The value of the suggested technique is its general effectiveness and ease of utilization with large numbers of students.

## ROOSEVELT'S FIRESIDE CHATS

WALDO W. BRADEN  
*Louisiana State University*

and

EARNEST BRANDENBURG  
*Washington University*

AT a tense moment in his career Franklin D. Roosevelt opened one of his speeches with these sentences:

Our government, happily, is a democracy. As part of the democratic process, your President is again taking an opportunity to report on the progress of national affairs to the real rulers of this country—the voting public.<sup>1</sup>

Herein Roosevelt expressed succinctly a major tenet of his political creed. Throughout his career when he needed support, he frequently took his case to the people, hoping to create sufficient pressure to assure the success of his program. Grace Tully, his private secretary for many years, noted that he “had a profound respect for the judgment of the American people and the power of public opinion.”<sup>2</sup> Out of this philosophy grew a remarkable set of speeches that have become known as the Fireside Chats.

These speeches found their beginning in Franklin Roosevelt's experiences with radio during his governorship of New York. The increase in the number of home radio sets and the extension of far flung radio networks coming simultaneously with Roosevelt's return to politics in the late twenties, after he had been stricken with poliomyelitis in 1921, provided him with a most effective and far reaching means of influencing public opinion. Personal visits to his constituents were no longer necessary. When a

recalcitrant legislature opposed revision of existing utility legislation, Roosevelt spoke to the people over a state radio chain with gratifying results; mail came “flooding into Albany, most of it in support of Roosevelt's position and most of it addressed to the working level of the legislature.”<sup>3</sup>

Roosevelt continued to speak directly with the people of the state, via the new medium of radio, about once every ten days during his governorship. This, he later explained, was “to enlist their support on various occasions when a hostile legislature declined to enact legislation for the benefit of the people.”<sup>4</sup>

Prior to Roosevelt's “intimate talk” of March 12, 1933, the first Fireside Chat, a President traditionally spoke to the people only in “formal addresses.”<sup>5</sup> The success of this first talk, his previous successes with radio while governor of New York, and the advantages of the new medium to a man with his physical handicap and with his excellent radio voice, made obvious to him and his advisers the desirability of continuing these presentations. As a result, Roosevelt delivered twenty-eight addresses commonly identified as Fireside Chats, in addition to his numerous other appearances on the air as President. Following is a chronological list of the

<sup>1</sup> Tully, *F. D. R.*, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, ed. Samuel I. Rosenman (New York, 1938), II, 60.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York, 1949), p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Fireside Chat of June 23, 1938.

<sup>5</sup> Grace Tully, *F. R. D., My Boss* (New York, 1949), p. 86.

Fireside Chats with their titles as given in Roosevelt's *Public Papers and Addresses*:

1. Sunday, March 12, 1933, "An Intimate Talk with the People of the United States on Banking."
2. Sunday, May 7, 1933, "What We Have Been Doing and What We are Planning to Do."
3. Monday, July 24, 1933, "The Simple Purposes and the Solid Foundations of Our Recovery Program."
4. Sunday, October 22, 1933, "We Are on Our Way, and We Are Headed in the Right Direction."
5. Thursday, June 28, 1934, "Are You Better Off Than You Were Last Year?"
6. Sunday, September 30, 1934, "We Are Moving Forward to Greater Freedom, to Greater Security for the Average Man."
7. Sunday, April 28, 1935, "Fear Is Vanishing, Confidence Is Growing, Faith Is Being Renewed in the Democratic Form of Government."
8. Sunday, September 6, 1936, "We Are Going to Conserve Soil, Conserve Water, Conserve Life."
9. Tuesday, March 9, 1937, "Discussing the Plan for Reorganization of the Judiciary."
10. Tuesday, October 12, 1937, "Discussing Legislation to be Recommended to the Extraordinary Session of the Congress."
11. Sunday, November 14, 1937, "Requesting Cooperation in the Taking of the Unemployment Census."<sup>6</sup>
12. Thursday, April 14, 1938, "Dictatorships Do Not Grow Out of Strong and Successful Governments, but Out of Weak and Helpless Ones." Fireside Chat on Present Economic Conditions and Measures Being Taken to Improve Them.
13. Friday, June 24, 1938, "I Have Every Right to Speak [in connection with political primaries] Where There May Be a Clear Issue Between Candidates for a Democratic

Nomination Involving Principles, or a Clear Misuse of My Own Name."

14. Sunday, September 3, 1939, "As Long as it Remains Within My Power to Prevent, There Will Be No Blackout of Peace in the United States." Fireside Chat on the War in Europe.
15. Sunday, May 26, 1940, "At This Time When the World Is Threatened by Forces of Destruction, It Is My Resolve and Yours to Build Up Our Armed Defenses."
16. Sunday, December 29, 1940, "There Can Be No Appeasement with Ruthlessness. We Must Be the Great Arsenal of Democracy."
17. Thursday, September 11, 1941, "When You See a Rattlesnake Posed to Strike You Do Not Wait Until He has Struck Before You Crush Him." [Maintaining freedom of the Seas]
18. Tuesday, December 9, 1941, "We Are Going to Win the War and We Are Going to Win the Peace That Follows," Fireside Chat to the Nation Following the Declaration of War with Japan.
19. Monday, February 23, 1942, "We Must Keep on Striking our Enemies Wherever and Whenever We Can Meet Them," Fireside Chat on Progress of the War.
20. Tuesday, April 28, 1942, "The Price for Civilization Must Be Paid in Hard Work and Sorrow and Blood."
21. Monday, September 7, 1942, "If the Vicious Spiral of Inflation Ever Gets Under Way, the Whole Economic System Will Stagger," Fireside Chat on the Cost of Living and the Progress of the War.
22. Monday, October 12, 1942, "The President Reports on the Home Front."
23. Sunday, May 2, 1943, "There Can Be No One Among Us—No One Faction—Powerful Enough to Interrupt the Forward March of Our People to Victory," Fireside Chat on the Federal Seizure of the Coal Mines.
24. Wednesday, July 28, 1943, "The Massed, Angered Forces of Common Humanity Are on the March. The First Crack in the Axis Has Come," Fireside Chat on the Progress of the War and Plans for Peace.
25. Wednesday, September 8, 1943, "Fireside Chat Opening Third War Loan Drive."
26. Friday, December 24, 1943, "Keep Us Strong in Our Faith That We Fight for a Better Day for Humankind," Christmas Eve Fireside Chat on Teheran and Cairo Conferences.

<sup>6</sup> There is some question as to whether this address should be listed as a Fireside Chat. It is not so listed in Roosevelt's *Public Papers and Addresses* (see Vol. VI, 483), but Sharon quotes "the editors" as explaining that they "made an 'oversight.'" (See footnote 7.) This address was delivered on a Sunday evening and began "I am appealing to the people of America tonight"; it concerned the single issue of the desirability of cooperation in the taking of the unemployment census; the success of the President's appeal in the speech was obviously of less importance to him than public reaction to his typical Fireside Chat.

27. Monday, June 5, 1944, "Fireside Chat on the Fall of Rome."  
 28. Monday, June 12, 1944, "Review of the Progress of the War—Fireside Chat Opening Fifth War Loan Drive."

The term Fireside Chat was introduced during the preparations for Roosevelt's second direct talk to the American people. While working out the mechanical details for broadcasting from the White House, Harry C. Butcher, manager of the Washington office of the Columbia Broadcasting System, gained considerable understanding of the President's purposes in these speeches. When he read a proposed press release announcing the broadcast of May 7, 1933, Mr. Butcher sensed that his program director "had not quite grasped the idea"; consequently he inserted the words "Fireside Chat" and some "additional corrections" in order to convey what he believed to be a more accurate interpretation of the President's forthcoming message.<sup>7</sup> The term was immediately accepted by the press and the public. Roosevelt obviously approved. His *Public Papers* identify addresses in those terms; a note accompanying the original "chat" refers to the expression: "The following is the first so-called fireside chat, which has been applied by the Press to the various radio reports I have made to the people of the Nation."<sup>8</sup> On two occasions the president used the term in his later addresses. On June 24, 1938, he began, "The American public and the American newspapers are certainly creatures of habit. It is the warmest night I have ever seen in Washington and yet this talk will be referred to as a fireside talk." On December 29,

1940, his first words were, "This is not a fireside chat on war."

The Fireside Chats typically were delivered from the Diplomatic Reception Room on the ground floor of the White House.<sup>9</sup> This room was large enough to accommodate a small audience, which usually consisted of a few members of Roosevelt's family, some of his close advisers, and a few other friends or associates who happened to be in Washington at the time. Its atmosphere "bore little relationship to the quiet and secluded atmosphere generally associated with a real fireside. There happened to be a real fireplace in the room, but it was empty. At it the President sat before a desk on which were bunched three or four microphones, a reading light, a pitcher of water, and glasses."<sup>10</sup> Sufficient space was available to permit each of the radio networks to have its own announcer in a separate cubicle.

There were some thirty uncomfortable folding chairs for those who had been invited to listen. . . . The audience was seated about ten minutes past ten for a ten-thirty broadcast (the usual hour), and the President was wheeled in at about ten-twenty, carrying his reading-copy and the inevitable cigarette.

Radio announcers for the major broadcasting chains would huddle about, testing their microphones. The radio engineers would test their equipment, which was spread all over the room from wall to wall, making it difficult to move about. . . .

The President, once seated at his desk, exchanged greetings and pleasantries for a few moments with the guests and the announcers. As the minute of ten-thirty approached, the atmosphere got more tense. The President would put out his cigarette, arrange his reading copy, and take a drink of water, as nervously as when he was about to address a visible audience. Then, on signal, complete silence, a nod from the chief radio engineer, the usual announcement from each announcer stating

<sup>7</sup> John H. Sharon has gathered much interesting information on procedures in these broadcasts. The authors of this paper acknowledge their indebtedness to him. See "The Fireside Chat," *Franklin D. Roosevelt Collector*, II (Nov. 1949), 2-30.

<sup>8</sup> *Public Papers and Addresses*, II, 60.

<sup>9</sup> Roosevelt's report on the Teheran and Cairo conferences, Dec. 24, 1943, was delivered from his study in the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working With Roosevelt* (New York, 1952), p. 93.



tersely that the broadcast was coming from the White House and introducing "The President of the United States"—and finally the clear, resonant voice: "My friends."<sup>11</sup>

The President's "intimate talk" with the people only eight days after he assumed office set the pattern for his subsequent Fireside Chats. Each of these talks was intended to concern only one fundamental issue, which at the moment was of much immediate interest to the American people. Addresses for such Democratic party affairs as Jackson or Jefferson Day dinners, routine observances of the March of Dimes or Red Cross campaigns, or situations with large immediate audiences were not occasions for Fireside Chats and were not called by that name. The "chats" were informal, simple presentations to be listened to and comprehended by the great mass of American voters.

The Fireside Chats varied in length from about 1200 to 4500 words and required from fifteen to forty-five minutes for delivery. The typical one took thirty minutes on the air.<sup>12</sup> For these talks with the people Roosevelt ordinarily chose to speak between nine and eleven p.m. (E.S.T.). A notable exception was his Christmas Eve Fireside Chat, delivered December 24, 1943, from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. (E.S.T.). Seemingly he preferred broadcasts on the first three days of the week, for twenty-one of the twenty-eight were presented on Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday.<sup>13</sup> Prior to the war he usually spoke over the facilities of at least two of the networks; but of course upon our entrance into World War II his audience increased, and he always had at his disposal the three major networks as well as overseas broadcasts by

short wave. Each one of these talks was presented at a moment when it would seem most timely and dramatic. Roosevelt and his advisers attempted to select the "logical occasion for each talk."<sup>14</sup> Hence they coincided with the bank holiday, the opening of the congressional elections, a return from a trip through the drouth stricken areas, the outbreak of war in Europe, the declaration of war on Japan, and the launching of a war bond drive. The talks, referred to by Roosevelt as "heart to heart talks"<sup>15</sup> were presented under the guise of informational reports to the people, but in truth most of them were highly stimulating and on occasion truly persuasive.

It would be difficult to rank these twenty-eight talks in terms of their significance. Each in its own way, highly important at the time of delivery, was accorded a dramatic significance in the melee of political events. The setting, ideas, and effectiveness of a select few will be considered.

#### FIRESIDE CHAT OF MARCH 12, 1933

##### *"An Intimate Talk With the People of the United States on Banking"*

Two days after he became President, Roosevelt sought to meet the banking crisis by the temporary closing of all banks. Only six days later, with the banks of the entire nation still closed, Roosevelt delivered a radio message described in his *Public Papers* as an "intimate talk with the people of the United States on banking." He began: "I want to talk for a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking. . . . I know that when you understand what we in Washington have been about I shall continue to have your co-

<sup>11</sup> Rosenmen, *Roosevelt*, p. 93.

<sup>12</sup> Eight required 15 minutes; nineteen, approximately 30 minutes; and one, 45 minutes.

<sup>13</sup> Eleven of the twenty-eight were presented Sunday evenings.

<sup>14</sup> See letter from F. D. R. to Frank C. Walker, February 13, 1936, *F. D. R., His Personal Letters*, ed. Elliott Roosevelt (New York, 1950), III, 554.

<sup>15</sup> *F. D. R., His Letters*, III, 554.

operation as fully as I have had your sympathy and help during the past week." The President explained the crisis in "A.B.C. fashion" and urged the people "not to repeat their own extraordinary [previous] behavior . . . when they attempted to convert their bank deposits into currency, [thus] precipitating crisis."<sup>16</sup> In concluding his address, Roosevelt made the following direct appeal:

Confidence and courage are the essentials of success in carrying out our plan. You people must have faith; you must not be stampeded by rumors or guesses. Let us unite in banishing fear. We have provided the machinery to restore our financial system; it is up to you to support and make it work. It is your problem no less than it is mine. Together we cannot fail.

"The talk made a tremendous popular hit."<sup>17</sup> Confidence was restored. "The worst of the crisis had been weathered. [The next day] solvent banks began to reopen . . . all over the nation."<sup>18</sup> Large volumes of currency were deposited as the banks were reopened.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, this "return flow of money came principally from hoarded funds rather than from active circulation."<sup>20</sup> As one popular writer expressed it,

The people listened . . . and felt that the man in the White House was their friend, as well as leader, who would save them from further catastrophe no matter what. Almost audibly, a sigh of relief went up through the entire land.<sup>21</sup>

The first Fireside Chat had accomplished its basic purpose and still more, for "the average citizen had [so] warmed to this appeal, [that] the most

successful medium of publicity [and persuasion] for the New Deal had been discovered."<sup>22</sup>

FIRESIDE CHAT OF MARCH 9, 1937  
*"Discussing the Plan for Reorganization of the Judiciary"*

Franklin Roosevelt's personal prestige had risen higher than ever before at the beginning of 1937. In the election of the previous year, the most one-sided election since 1820, he had carried every section of the country; his party had won a greater majority in Congress than any modern president's; many Congressmen were well aware that they had "ridden Roosevelt's coattails into office." Moreover, the campaign of 1936 had been "primarily concerned with the personality and principles of . . . Franklin D. Roosevelt."<sup>23</sup>

The overwhelming mandate from the people convinced the President that he could carry out the remainder of his policies without delay. He was convinced that his "Congressional program, which had pulled the nation out of despair, had been fairly completely undermined" by the courts.<sup>24</sup> Hence, in early 1937 Roosevelt launched a direct attack upon the judiciary.<sup>25</sup> He went before Congress, February 5, with a plan for the "reorganization of the Judicial Branch" which sought, primarily, a judiciary of younger men.<sup>26</sup> Then pending

<sup>22</sup> Wecter, *Depression*, p. 65.

<sup>23</sup> Laura Crowell, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's Audience Persuasion in the 1936 Campaign," *Speech Monographs*, 17 (1950), 48-64.

<sup>24</sup> Introduction to the 1937 volume of *Public Papers and Addresses*, VI, lviii.

<sup>25</sup> For Roosevelt's review of court rulings which had been "major blows" to his administration, see the Introductions to the 1935 and 1937 volumes of his *Public Papers and Addresses*, IV, 3-14, and VI, liii-lviii.

<sup>26</sup> At that time, Justice Louis D. Brandeis was 80; Willis Van Devanter, 77; James Clark McReynolds, 75; George Sutherland, 74; Charles Evans Hughes, 74; Pierce Butler, 70; Benjamin Cardozo, 66; Harlan F. Stone, 65; and Owen J. Roberts, 61. Van Devanter, McReynolds, Sutherland, and Butler had been invariably conservative in their opinions.

<sup>16</sup> "The Roosevelt Week," *Time*, XXI (March 20, 1933), 7.

<sup>17</sup> James Truslow Adams and Charles Garrett Vannest, *The Record of America* (New York, 1949), p. 558.

<sup>18</sup> Dixon Wecter, *The Age of the Great Depression, 1929-1941* (New York, 1948), p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> By the middle of April, deposits in the reporting member banks had increased by one billion dollars.

<sup>20</sup> *Public Papers and Addresses*, II, 60.

<sup>21</sup> John Gunther, *Roosevelt in Retrospect* (New York, 1950), p. 278.

was a bill to permit federal justices to retire at the age of seventy at full pay, providing they had held commissions for at least ten years. Roosevelt urged that for each qualified justice who failed to take advantage of this retirement provision, the President should be authorized to appoint an additional justice.<sup>27</sup> Other changes were also proposed, but the one issue of great interest to both the President and the people was the proposal affecting the Supreme Court.<sup>28</sup>

Taking their cue from ex-President Hoover who accused his successor of wanting to "pack the Supreme Court," the Republicans immediately attacked the bill. Gradually powerful opposition also developed among Democrats. Senator George of Georgia, who had played an important part in writing the 1936 Democratic platform, accused Mr. Roosevelt of repudiating that platform. Wheeler of Montana, a Democrat and then widely known as a liberal, launched a speaking campaign to convince the country that the proposed bill would make the Supreme Court subservient to one man.

When opposition continued to develop, the President took over direct leadership of the campaign for his bill. On March 4 he spoke by radio to Victory Dinners of Democrats throughout the country. And then he carried the issue to the people in a Fireside Chat. He repeated historical precedents for his plan and attempted to answer charges that he sought to destroy the balance of power among the three branches of the Federal government. The President's

primary purpose, however, was to convince the people that the courts were deliberately, and unfairly thwarting his program.<sup>29</sup>

Instead of the popular support which the recent election had given him reason to expect, the response to the court speeches was not favorable. Liberals were divided in their opinions. Some of his advisers, for example, Farley, Frankfurter, Rosenman, and Corcoran, thought the President had erred in this attack. Most newspapers vigorously defended the Court. It became increasingly clear that the President's overwhelming Congressional majorities had melted away on the court issue as the debate, called "the bitterest since the League of Nations struggle,"<sup>30</sup> continued.

Roosevelt faced the problem of convincing the nation that his judicial reform bill was essential to the welfare of the country. The people who had come to venerate the Supreme Court were shocked by references to "nine old men." They had no desire for experimentation with the Supreme Court of the land, especially in light of Roosevelt's admission that some of his experiments would probably fail and be discarded. Roosevelt, the practical man of politics, could not convince the American people that his court proposals would harm no sacred traditions. "Practical politics" seemed an insufficient reason for tampering with the courts. Moreover, the Presi-

<sup>29</sup> "... There is no basis for the claim made by some members of the Court that something in the Constitution has compelled them regretfully to thwart the will of the people. . . . We have, therefore, reached the point as a Nation where we must take action to save the Constitution from itself. . . . We want a Supreme Court which will do justice under the Constitution—not over it. . . . We must have judges who will bring to the courts a present-day sense of the constitution—judges who will . . . reject the legislative powers which the courts have today assumed."

<sup>30</sup> Jeanette P. Nichols and Roy F. Nichols, *The Republic of the United States* (New York, 1942), p. 549.

<sup>27</sup> A draft of the proposed bill submitted to Congress set fifteen as the maximum number of Supreme Court justices at any time.

<sup>28</sup> During his first term in office, Roosevelt had no opportunities to make appointments to the Supreme Court. Preceding presidents had usually been more fortunate in influencing the Court. Taft had named five members; Wilson, three; Harding, four; and Hoover, three.

dent did not succeed in calming the misgivings of those who knew that the court proposals had been recommended without consultation with the Democratic congressional leaders. Many thought they sensed an element of executive trickery in the whole proposal. John Gunther's evaluation is typical:

If Roosevelt had been more candid, if he had explored opinion more subtly and taken Congress into his confidence, the result might have been different. But people could not get over the feeling that the proposal had been cooked up in an underhanded way. If he had said without equivocation, "It has become necessary to pack the Court, and I am going to pack it," he might have won. Many men of good will agree that something had to be done to stop usurpation by the courts of the legislative function; but they could not stomach the way Roosevelt did it.<sup>31</sup>

Roosevelt's Fireside Chat and other addresses on the Court issue did not calm the doubts of the public and as time passed his support on the issue decreased.<sup>32</sup>

The degree of Roosevelt's success or failure on the court issue is clouded, however, by the fact that Supreme Court decisions began to go in favor of New Deal philosophy.<sup>33</sup> "The Senate has been

evenly divided on the [Supreme Court] issue with eight or ten members undecided, [but] now the waverers joined the opposition, believing that the necessity for the Bill had passed, and even the ranks of its supporters showed signs of breaking."<sup>34</sup> Roosevelt did not hesitate later to claim a clear-cut victory on the basis of the changed attitude of the Court,<sup>35</sup> but the end result was considered a defeat for the President.<sup>36</sup> He signed a compromise bill August 24 which retained most of the procedural reforms he had recommended, but made no mention of the appointment of new justices and judges.

1936. (Justice Roberts switched sides on the two decisions.) April 12, the Court found the Wagner Labor Relations Act constitutional. May 18, Justice Van Devanter, who had been conservative in most of his opinions, announced his retirement to take effect June 1 under the new Retirement Act. May 24, the Supreme Court validated the Social Security Act.

<sup>34</sup> Basil Rauch, *The History of the New Deal, 1933-1938* (New York, 1944), p. 281.

<sup>35</sup> "The Court yielded. The Court changed. The Court began to interpret the Constitution instead of torturing it. It was still the same Court, with the same justices. No new appointments had been made. And yet, beginning shortly after the message of February 5, 1937, what a change! ". . . I feel convinced that the change would never have come, unless this frontal attack had been made upon the philosophy of the majority of the Court. That is why I regard the message of February 5, 1937, as one of the most important and significant events of my administration on the domestic scene." Introduction to *Public Papers and Addresses*, VI, p. lxvi.

<sup>36</sup> "[Roosevelt's] scheme for changing the trend of decisions by changes in Court personnel other than in the usual manner was completely defeated." Carl Brent Swisher, *American Constitutional Development* (Boston, 1943), p. 946. "The Court stood victor, for the principle of judicial review remained intact and unrestricted; the Court's authority as an institutional force had not been surrendered." Louis M. Hacker and Benjamin B. Kendrick, *The United States Since 1865* (New York, 1949), p. 574. "The Defeat of Roosevelt's reorganization plan was a great moral victory for the opponents of the New Deal." Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr. and Nelson Manfred Blake, *Since 1900, A History of the United States in Our Times* (New York, 1947), p. 576.

<sup>31</sup> Gunther, *Roosevelt*, p. 296.

<sup>32</sup> Gallup polls indicated no successes on the part of the President, and a slight trend in favor of his opposition.

"Would you favor curbing the power of the Supreme Court to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional?" (Dec., 1936): No, 59%; "Would you favor a compromise on the Court plan which would permit the President to appoint two new judges instead of six?" (May, 1937): No, 62%; "Should Congress pass the President's Supreme Court plan?" (June, 1937): No, 58%; "Would you like to have President Roosevelt continue his fight to enlarge the Supreme Court?" (Sept., 1937): No, 68%; "Do you believe the Roosevelt administration should try to defeat the reelection of Democratic congressmen who opposed the Supreme Court plan?" (Sept., 1937): No, 73%. George Gallup and Claude Robinson, "American Institute of Public Opinion—Surveys, 1935-38," *Public Opinion Quart.* II (1938), 378-79.

<sup>33</sup> March 22, 1937, the Washington State Minimum Wage Act was found constitutional although it raised almost identical issues with the New York measure declared invalid in



## FIRESIDE CHAT OF SEPTEMBER 3, 1939

*Outbreak of World War II*

The Nazis began their invasion of Poland in September, 1939. England and France declared war on Germany, September 3. That same Sunday evening, Roosevelt delivered a Fireside Chat to the American people who were overwhelmingly desirous of keeping the United States out of the war.<sup>37</sup> The President's argument on the direct issue of war or peace was that the best method for the American people to preserve their peace was to subscribe to his policies, for he was determined, so he said, that the United States should not go to war.

I have said not once but many times that I have seen war and that I hate war. . . .

I hope the United States will keep out of this war. I believe that it will. And I give you assurance and reassurance that every effort of your government will be directed toward that end.

As long as it remains within my power to prevent, there will be no blackout of peace in the United States.

Roosevelt's statement that he desired peace for the United States demanded ethical support. His foreign policy had received its most severe criticism because many persons thought his condemnations of European aggressors and his proposals to "quarantine" the "disease" of war had endangered, rather than helped preserve, peace for the nation. Public opinion polls indicated that more than a two to one majority favored stricter neutrality laws in preference to leaving the job to the President.<sup>38</sup> To meet these attitudes and to inspire faith

in his ability to keep the nation out of war, the President reviewed the specific instances in which he had attempted to preserve world peace.<sup>39</sup> Newspapers praised the speech of September 3, 1939, primarily for that sentiment.<sup>40</sup>

President Roosevelt did not follow Woodrow Wilson's example of asking Americans to remain neutral in thought and deed. Instead, he declared:

This nation will remain a neutral nation, but I cannot ask that every American remain neutral in thought as well. Even a neutral has a right to take account of the facts. Even a neutral cannot be asked to close his mind or his conscience.

This line of thought prepared the way for the President to argue later that the existing arms embargoes should be lifted as contrary to American concepts of neutrality. Roosevelt was clearly inconsistent in advocating "neutrality" at one time "without reservations" and at another time as not requiring that Americans be "neutral in thought."<sup>41</sup> His concept of neutrality involved: first, a declaration of nonparticipation in the conflict; second, refraining from acts which might be called warlike under strict interpretation of international law; and third, the right to give moral support and to set up conditions making it easier for the favored belligerents to obtain critical materials. Such a policy was a far cry from what neutrality as a principle of international law had come

<sup>39</sup> "It is right that I should recall to your minds the consistent and at times successful efforts of your government in these crises to throw the full weight of the United States into the cause of peace."

<sup>40</sup> "Press Indorses Roosevelt on U. S. Neutrality," *New York Herald Tribune*, Sept. 5, 1939. Ernest K. Lindley commented, "If newspaper editorial reaction is accepted as the acid test, the President's radio address of Sunday night was an overwhelming success." "Not Neutral in Thought," *Washington Post*, Sept. 8, 1939.

<sup>41</sup> Addresses of Sept. 3 and Sept. 21, 1939.

<sup>37</sup> The American Institute of Public Opinion asked: "Should we send our army and navy abroad to fight against Germany? 84% of those questioned answered "No" after World War II had broken out in September, 1939. 95% said "No" in October, 1939. "Gallup and Fortune Polls," *Public Opinion Quart.* IV (1940), 111.

<sup>38</sup> *Public Opinion Quart.* II (1938), 376.

to mean to authorities on the subject,<sup>42</sup> but there is no doubt that Roosevelt's recommendations were far more successful with both Congress and the American people than were those of his opposition.<sup>43</sup>

The President was particularly anxious to forestall any attempt to label him or his party as the "war" group or to designate any group to which he did not belong as the "peace" bloc. He successfully handled that issue, for the American people, eighty-four to ninety-five per cent of whom consistently opposed becoming involved in war<sup>44</sup> approved his attitudes and policies with regard to the European situation.<sup>45</sup>

#### FIRESIDE CHAT OF DECEMBER 29, 1940

##### *"We Must be the Great Arsenal of Democracy"*

The might of the German war machine, as it crushed Western Europe, convinced the President and the American people of the desirability of aiding the British and of assuming the role of

a non-belligerent. Although many in the United States were still determined to keep their country from entering the war,<sup>46</sup> they gradually came to believe that helping England was more important than staying out of the conflict.<sup>47</sup> Roosevelt decided to speak to the American people on Sunday evening, December 29, 1940. According to Robert Sherwood:

Roosevelt really enjoyed working on this speech for, with the political campaign over, it was the first chance he had had in months and even years to speak his mind with comparative freedom. He had indulged himself once, six months previously, in the "stab in the back" reference, but the consequences of that were so awkward

<sup>46</sup> About 85% of the Americans questioned consistently answered "No" to the Gallup query of whether the United States should enter the war. "If you were asked today to vote on the question of the United States entering the war, How would you vote—to go into the war, or to stay out of the war?"

	Go in	Stay out
June, 1940 (after battle of Flanders)	16%	84%
June, 1940 (after Italy's entrance)	18	82
July, 1940 (after collapse of France)	14	86
October, 1940 (aerial blitzkrieg on London)	17	83
December, 1940 (after British gains in Africa)	12	88
February, 1941	15	85

"Gallup and Fortune Polls," *Public Opinion Quart. V* (1940), 326.

<sup>47</sup> "Which of these two things do you think is the more important for the United States to do—to keep out of the war ourselves, or to try to help England win, even at the risk of getting into the war?"

	Help England	Stay out
May, 1940	36%	64%
June, 1940	36	64
July, 1940	39	61
August, 1940	47	53
September, 1940	52	48
November, 1940	50	50
December, 1940	60	40
January, 1941	68	32

*Public Opinion Quart. V* (1940), 326.

Further evidence of the opinion of Americans in 1939 and early 1940 has been supplied by Philip E. Jacob, of Princeton University, who analyzed the "Influence of World Events on U. S. 'Neutrality' Opinion." He concluded, "On the one hand, an overwhelming majority of the American public want the Allies to win the war. At the same time, the American people are more determined than ever to stay neutral as regards military participation or financial aid to those who have not paid their debts." *Public Opinion Quart. IV* (1940), 63-64.

<sup>42</sup> Following is a typical definition of neutrality: "Neutrality . . . is the obligation to hold the scales even, to remain a friend of both belligerents, to lend support to neither, to avoid passing judgment on the merits of their war." Edwin Borchard and William Potten Lage, *Neutrality for the United States* (New Haven, 1940), p. vi.

<sup>43</sup> His address of September 21, 1939 recommending changes in the neutrality laws was endorsed by the great majority of newspapers, regardless of political affiliation. "Majority of Papers Endorse Roosevelt Neutrality Message," *Washington Star*, Sept. 22, 1939. Prior to the President's speech of September 21, 57% of the voters with opinions in an American Institute of Public Opinion survey were in favor of changing the neutrality law. After the President's speech, a new survey found that sentiment for lifting the embargo had increased to 62%. The latter survey was taken before Congressional debate began on the issue. George Gallup, "The Gallup Poll," *Washington Post*, Oct. 4, 1939.

<sup>44</sup> *Public Opinion Quart. IV* (1940), 111.

<sup>45</sup> Do you approve or disapprove of Roosevelt's policies with regard to the European situation up to now? Approve, 69.2%; Partly approve, 11.7%; Disapprove, 5.8%; Don't know, 13.3%. *Public Opinion, Quart. IV* (1940), 105, a *Fortune* poll released in Nov., 1939.

that he had felt compelled subsequently to confine himself to the most namby-pamby euphemisms in all references to the international situation. Now, for the first time, he could mention the Nazis by name. He could lash out against the apostles of appeasement. . . . He could speak plainly on the subject which was always in his mind—the disastrous folly of any attempt at a negotiated peace.<sup>48</sup>

The President declared that his purpose in this speech was to avoid the necessity of a "last ditch war" for the preservation of American independence. He advocated increased aid to the Allies who were holding the "aggressors from our shores now." He assured his listeners that acting as the "arsenal of democracy" would "keep war away from our country"; this "arsenal of democracy" phrase was tremendously successful with the American people.<sup>49</sup> Through it, the President was able to shift his arguments. While the United States was maintaining a policy of "neutrality," he had not directly urged aid for the Allies. His original proposal to repeal the neutrality acts had been to make the United States "truly neutral."<sup>50</sup> In contrast to his previous stand, the President contended in his Fireside Chat of December 29 that the United States must provide aid to the Allies because such aid was essential to the defense of this country. He declared:

<sup>48</sup>Sherwood, *Roosevelt*, p. 226.

<sup>49</sup>"Hopkins provided the key phrases which had already been used in some newspaper editorial: 'We must be the great arsenal of democracy.' I have been told that the phrase was originated by William S. Knudsen and also by Jean Monnet, but whoever originated it, Roosevelt was the one who proclaimed it. There was some debate at first over its use by the President, since it might seem to preclude the eventual extension of aid to the Soviet Union or to certain Latin American 'republics,' but the phrase was too good to be stopped by any quibbles." Sherwood, *Roosevelt*, p. 226.

<sup>50</sup>Message to Congress, Sept. 21, 1939. He boasted later, however, that repeal had been instituted as "a policy of aid for the democracies . . . [which] had its origin in the first month of the war, when I urged upon the Congress repeal of the arms embargo provisions in the Neutrality Law." Address of March 15, 1941.

The Nazi masters of Germany have made it clear that they intend not only to dominate all life and thought in their own country, but also to enslave the whole of Europe, and then to use the resources of Europe to dominate the rest of the world.

As he stirred Americans' fear of destruction, Roosevelt argued that the United States should aid Germany's opponents because the Axis was "being held away from our shores" by the Allies. This approach coincided with a shift of public opinion.<sup>51</sup> The American people supported the President in his plea that the United States should be the "arsenal of democracy." Press Secretary Stephen Early said that messages sent to the White House approved the Fireside Chat of December 29, 1940 in a ratio of one hundred to one.<sup>52</sup> The Lend-Lease Bill, presented to Congress in January by the President, was hotly debated, but those favoring aid to the democracies clearly were on the side more popular with the great majority of American citizens.

#### FIRESIDE CHAT OF SEPTEMBER 11, 1941 *"Maintaining Freedom of the Seas"*

On June 20, 1941, the President delivered a speech revealing that an American merchant vessel, the *Robin Moor*, had been sunk May 21 by a German submarine in the South Atlantic while *en route* to South Africa.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup>According to Gallup polls, December 1940, was the first time a clear-cut majority of Americans believed helping England win was more important than keeping the United States out of the war. From 60% in December, the percentage increased to 68% in January, 1941.

<sup>52</sup>"Wires 100-1 Favor Roosevelt's Stand," *Washington Post*, Dec. 31, 1940.

<sup>53</sup>The facts were a bitter condemnation of submarine warfare and Nazi methods. The vessel had been sunk within thirty minutes from the time of the first warning. It was sunk without provision for the safety of the passengers and crew, who were left afloat in small lifeboats from two to three weeks until they were accidentally discovered and rescued by friendly vessels. Roosevelt branded the act as "outrageous," as that of "an international outlaw."

In August, 1941, the President and Prime Minister Churchill met secretly and agreed upon the joint declaration of August 14, 1941, which became known as the "Atlantic Charter." As American determination to see that Great Britain got sorely needed supplies increased, and as American armed patrols moved farther into the Atlantic, "warlike" incidents multiplied.<sup>54</sup>

His entire address of September 11, 1941, delivered by radio to his "fellow-Americans," dealt with the Nazi menace in the Atlantic; it broke the news to the public that to enforce "freedom of the seas" United States warships had orders to "shoot first" at any Nazi vessels seen within certain areas of the Atlantic designated as American "defensive waters." Roosevelt had stressed since May, 1941, that America's historic policy had insisted upon "freedom of the seas." This policy justified, according to his arguments to the American people in September, 1941, "a naval and air patrol [operating] over a vast expanse of the Atlantic" which would "protect all merchant ships—not only American ships but ships of any flag—engaged in commerce."

The American people<sup>55</sup> and the press<sup>56</sup> heartily endorsed the President's speech and his arguments for "freedom of the seas." Roosevelt was given credit not just for voicing an already established sentiment for freedom of the seas,

but for creating that sentiment. He denied the rights of the Nazis to prescribe areas of the high seas into which no ships could enter without "peril of being sunk," even though he had argued at the beginning of World War II that "American merchant vessels should . . . be restricted from entering danger zones" and that those vessels which did enter "danger zones" be warned that "all such voyages are solely at the risk of the American owners themselves."<sup>57</sup> Similarly, he had argued early in the war that munitions should not be "carried to belligerent countries on American vessels."

Roosevelt was clearly inconsistent concerning "freedom of the seas," but the more significant fact seems to be that "freedom of the seas" as a line of argument was stressed by the President only during that particular period when the doctrine happened to coincide with Roosevelt's own desires for immediate American foreign policy and when an appeal to this "historic American policy" would forward public support of the President's actions. During the earlier period when this country endeavored to commit no hostile acts or make any breeches which could be clearly labeled warlike, the President made no mention of "freedom of the seas."

Franklin Roosevelt's arguments for America's "historic policy" of "freedom of the seas" were highly successful with his American audience. Those who favored increased aid to the Allies, those who were most vociferous in their condemnations of the fascists were, of course, ready to support the doctrine. But from no group was there any organized disagreement. Since the President had not concerned himself with the issue until late in 1941, and since his advocacy of

<sup>54</sup> For brief details of the sinking of eight merchant vessels by the Nazis between August 17 and October 19, 1941, see Wheeler B. Preston, "American Involvement," *American Year Book, 1941* (New York, 1942), p. 75.

<sup>55</sup> More than twice as many people approved as disapproved when the Gallup poll asked them, after the speech of September 11, 1941, whether "the United States navy [should] shoot at German submarines or warships on sight." "Gallup and Fortune Polls," *Public Opinion Quart.* VI (1942), 140-174.

<sup>56</sup> "Press Comments on Roosevelt's Speech," *New York Times*, Sept. 12, 1941. "Editors Appraise F. D. R.'s Address," *United States News*, XI (Sept. 19, 1941), 16.

<sup>57</sup> Message to Congress, Sept. 21, 1939.



the doctrine then implemented his avowed "primary task" of "providing more and more arms" for the Allies, he, apparently, used the doctrine to bring about his desired foreign policy rather than as an end in itself.

Roosevelt's plea for "freedom of the seas" gave the American people a moral principle with which to support a view they wanted to find reasons to uphold. By autumn of 1941, sentiment against the Axis was overwhelming. Roosevelt was the one person primarily responsible for using the phrase "freedom of the seas" during World War II to make possible the ever increasing aid to the Allies which both he and his listeners desired.

Mr. Roosevelt firmly believed it the duty and right of the executive to deal directly with the American voters. He schooled the people to anticipate and to enjoy his talks with them. Only the conviction of his advisers that he ought not use the Fireside Chat too frequently<sup>58</sup> prevented the delivery of far more such "intimate talks." The subjects of his Fireside Chats were the critical issues of his Presidency. After American entrance into World War II, however, he typically used his "chats" not to win support for his own policies in opposition to others in this country, but primarily to report on the progress of the

conflict and to lift the morale of the American people.<sup>59</sup>

The language of the Fireside Chats reflects Roosevelt's eagerness to communicate his ideas to the voters. Samuel I. Rosenman suggests this spirit when he tells about the preparation of the first of these talks:

The Treasury Department prepared a scholarly, comprehensive draft of the speech. The President saw that it would be meaningless to most people, tossed it aside without any attempt at rewriting, and proceeded to write his own instead. He dictated it in simple, ordinary language—he looked for words that he would use in an informal conversation with one or two of his friends. He found the kind of language that everyone could understand. And everyone did understand. Confidence was restored. And in those dark days, confidence was essential for a panic of bewilderment could have meant chaos and collapse.<sup>60</sup>

Roosevelt achieved directness and intimacy by the frequent use of the first and the second persons. He almost always referred to himself as "I" and to the voters as "you." This spirit is reflected in many of his openings:

It is three months since I have talked with the people of this country about our national problems. . . . (Oct. 22, 1933.)

It has been several months since I have talked with you concerning the problems of Government. (June 28, 1934.)

Three months have passed since I talked with you shortly after the adjournment of the Congress. (Sept. 30, 1934.)

Since my Annual Message to the Congress on January 4th, last, I have not addressed the general public over the air. (April 28, 1935.)

<sup>58</sup> Stephen Early, Roosevelt's Press Secretary, explained: "Mr. Roosevelt would call in his staff and tell us, 'I think I'll go on the air next week and talk about such and such.' There would be a discussion to see if it would be advisable for him to speak on such a subject at that particular time. Nine times out of ten we advised against his going on the air for we didn't want the Fireside Chat to lose its appeal to the people. The President wanted to go on the radio many more times than we would allow him." Sharon, *Franklin D. Roosevelt Collection II* (Nov. 1949), 10.

<sup>59</sup> Roosevelt delivered approximately the same number of Fireside Chats after the entrance of the United States into World War II as before. Although some of these attracted tremendous listening audiences (such as the address of Dec. 9, 1941, following the attack upon Pearl Harbor, and his report, Dec. 24, 1943, of his conferences at Teheran and Cairo), in no one of them did the President support a point of view opposed by a significant number of his listeners. His address May 2, 1943, following Federal seizure of the coal mines, was delivered to an American audience containing a relatively small but extremely hostile minority.

<sup>60</sup> Rosenman, *Roosevelt*, pp. 92-93.

He likewise used many devices to make his thoughts clear and to emphasize the simplicity of his ideas. These talks with the people abound in phrases and sentences like the following: "let me state the simple fact," "let me make clear," "one more point before I close," "I want to talk with you very simply," "let me give you an example." He included as supporting material numerous simple illustrations and homely analogies taken directly from his daily conversations and from his frequent trips throughout the nation. Rosenman suggests that the efforts of many persons went into these speeches in order to capture this intimate quality.

When Roosevelt spoke to the nation on these occasions, he adopted a warm, friendly, direct, conversational mode of speech. Rosenman characterizes this manner on one occasion:

I heard Roosevelt deliver this speech. His voice seemed to reach out right into every home in the United States. Those paragraphs, spoken badly, could have sounded very "corny"; but, as he delivered them, they expressed the deep, sincere, warm emotions of a leader who was terribly concerned about the millions of human beings whose welfare was so greatly affected by the policies of the government he led.<sup>61</sup>

The Fireside Chats demonstrated Roosevelt's ability to "bring the people right into the White House."<sup>62</sup> Perhaps for the first time in American history the people of the nation were made to feel that they knew their President personally and that they were receiving inside information first hand on impor-

tant events. They were stirred and stimulated by Roosevelt's friendly informal manner; they somehow felt that they had a direct part in shaping the policies of the federal government and that Washington was no farther away than the radio receiving sets in their living rooms. Unquestionably, his continued acceptance by the majority of the American people, despite the frequent opposition of the press<sup>63</sup> and his occasional troubles with Congress<sup>64</sup> was due in important measure to Roosevelt's outstanding success whenever he carried issues directly to the people in his Fireside Chats.

<sup>63</sup> In 1940, for example, Roosevelt won the election with a popular vote of 27,000,000 to Willkie's 22,000,000 and an electoral vote of 449 to 82. However, the "700 daily newspapers that thus far have declared their support of Wendell Willkie for President have a combined circulation of 16,387,145 against an aggregate circulation of 5,332,905 for the 216 that have come out for President Roosevelt." "Willkie Holds Heavy Lead in Press Backing," *New York Times*, Aug. 31, 1940.

<sup>64</sup> Note, for example, the relatively minor fluctuations in Roosevelt's popularity as determined by public opinion polls about every three to six months from late 1937 until December 1939. (*Public Opinion Quart.*, II (1938), 377; III (1939), 583; and IV (1940), 85. Yet within this period, from January to August 1939, Congressmen were far more critical of Roosevelt and much less inclined to follow his wishes than at any previous time during his Presidency. The Congressional session was typically described by such headlines and articles as: "Congress Opens Fight to Take Back Powers," *New York Times*, July 2, 1939; "Congressional Revolt Dominates National News of the Summer," *Scholastic*, XXXV (Sept. 18, 1939); "Congress Checks Up at Box Office, Dramatic First Act in its Fight with Roosevelt," *Business Week*, Aug. 12, 1939; "Adjournment Ends a Chapter of Presidential Defeat," *Newsweek*, XIV (Aug. 14, 1939), 11, and "Congress Quits, . . . Clash Marks End," *New York Times*, Aug. 6, 1939.

<sup>61</sup> Rosenman, *Roosevelt*, p. 175.

<sup>62</sup> Sherwood, *Roosevelt*, p. 42.

## SOME FACTORS CONDITIONING RESPONSE TO ARGUMENT\*

WILLIAM E. UTTERBACK and HAROLD F. HARDING

*The Ohio State University*

THE use of argumentative appeal to influence opinion is so familiar a feature of the democratic process that we seldom question its efficacy. Assuming that argument addressed to the public by means of the printed page, the radio, and the public platform does change opinion, we take it for granted that when the volume of argument is sufficient, its influence is decisive. Nor do we often inquire into the factors which may limit or condition response to such appeal. Most of this confidence in the influence of argument rests on faith rather than evidence. As a matter of fact little is known about the conditions which determine response to argumentative appeal.

It was the purpose of this study to identify some of the factors which condition response to argument on a controversial public question. Specifically the study sought to answer the following question:

1. In presenting argument what is the comparative effectiveness of the printed page, the radio, and the public platform?
2. Is response to argument on a public question affected by the recipient's general political attitude?
3. Is it affected by whether he is already in agreement with the conclusion supported, in disagreement with it, or undecided regarding it?
4. Is it affected by the degree of con-

fidence with which he holds his previous opinion?

On the first question three previously published studies bear directly. In 1935, using the Smith-Thurstone scale on Prohibition as a measuring instrument, Knower<sup>1</sup> found that oral argument induces significant change in attitude. A year later he reported<sup>2</sup> that it induces more change than does printed argument. Using Likert attitude scales in a study of the influence of emotional propaganda material, Wilkie<sup>3</sup> found platform presentation more effective than radio in effecting change in attitude. Later Thompson<sup>4</sup> reported that attitude is not significantly changed by listening to a recording of an argumentative speech by a prominent political personality. Further study of the comparative influence of various modes of presenting argument would be desirable. And further studies should be undertaken to identify factors other than mode of presentation that may condition response to argumentative appeal.

### I. PROCEDURE

The present experiment was conducted in fifteen sections of Speech 401

<sup>1</sup> Franklin H. Knower, "A Study of the Effect of Oral Argument on Changes of Attitude," *Jour. of Social Psychology*, VI (1935), 315-347.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin H. Knower, "A Study of the Effect of Printed Argument on Change of Attitude," *Jour. of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, XXX (1936), 522-532.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Wilkie, "An Experimental Comparison of the Speech, the Radio, and the Printed Page as Propaganda Devices," *Arch. of Psychology*, XXV (1934), No. 169.

<sup>4</sup> Wayne N. Thompson, "A Study of the Attitude of College Students toward Thomas E. Dewey before and after Hearing Him Speak," *Speech Monographs*, 16 (1949), 125-134.

\*This study was supported in part from funds granted by the Ohio State University Research Foundation to the Ohio State University for aid in fundamental research.

at the Ohio State University during the Spring Quarter, 1953. Each section contains about twenty-five students. The undergraduates who elect this course in public speaking are drawn from all colleges on the campus, with students from the College of Commerce predominating. Their background and interests do not change appreciably from year to year.

In preparation for the experiment a four-minute argumentative statement was prepared strongly supporting the negative answer to the question, "Should the United States advocate abolition of the veto in the United Nations?" a question on which previous studies had indicated a fairly even division of opinion among those who enroll in the course. In approximately one-third of the sections the argument was presented from memory by a speaker of superior competence, the same speaker delivering the speech in all sections; in another third the speech was broadcast over a public address system from a tape recording prepared by the person who delivered the speech in the first sections; in the final third of the sections the students were asked to devote four minutes to reading the argument silently from the printed page. Aside from the difference in mode of presentation care was taken to maintain uniformity in all condi-

tions surrounding presentation of the argument.

Under all three modes of presentation each student signed and checked nine-point graphic rating scales indicating his opinion on the question immediately before and after exposure to the stimulus. The scale ranged from a completely confident "No" through "Undecided" to a completely confident "Yes" in answer to the question. For purposes of scoring the nine stations on the scale were assigned values from 1 to 9, beginning at the "No" end. In addition, each student indicated on a simple questionnaire his personal choice among the following aspirants to office in the recent presidential campaign: Senator Taft, General Eisenhower, Governor Stevenson.

## II. RESULTS

A. *Modes of presentation.* Before comparing the influence of the three modes of presentation on response to the argumentative appeal, it would be well to determine whether any of the modes effected a statistically significant shift of opinion toward the "N" extremity of the scale (the position supported by the argument). Table I presents the relevant data.

<sup>5</sup> Here and elsewhere by "desired" direction is meant the direction in which the argument was attempting to influence opinion.

TABLE I  
RESPONSE TO THREE MODES OF PRESENTATION

	Delivery of Speech	Tape Recording	Silent Reading
N	124	110	100
Pre-stimulus mean position on scale	4.72	5.38	5.00
Post-stimulus mean position	3.36	4.54	4.04
Significance of difference	$P < .01^*$	$.02 < P < .05$	$.01 < P < .02$

\*Here and in subsequent tables where means are compared, the value of P is determined by the *t* formula; where proportions are compared, the value of P is determined by computing Chi square.



As all three modes of presentation effected a significant shift of opinion in the desired direction,<sup>5</sup> we inquire next which mode effected the greatest shift. For the purpose it may be more meaningful to compare the percentages of subjects shifting and the mean distances shifted in the desired direction for the several modes of presentation. In Table II, and in all of the tables that follow, subjects with a pre-stimulus position of 1 on the nine-point scale are eliminated from the computation, as they already stood at the extreme "N" end of the scale and thus were not candidates for influence by the stimulus. Of the 290 subjects included in the computation, 13 moved in the "wrong" direction. They are included in computing the means; in computing percentages they are lumped with those who did not shift at all, as both groups represent failure of the stimulus to effect shift in the desired direction. Distribution of the 13 among the three experimental conditions does not suggest that their negative

response can be attributed to the mode of presentation.

The significance of these differences is indicated in Table 3.

We conclude that delivery of the speech effected more shift in the desired direction than did the tape recording regardless of whether we measure shift in terms of percentage shifting or of mean shift effected. Delivery of the speech also effected a greater mean shift in the desired direction than did silent reading and probably induced a larger percentage of subjects to shift in that direction. There was no significant difference in persuasive effect between tape recording and silent reading, though the data suggest that silent reading may have been the more effective mode.

B. *Influence of political attitude.* Personal choice among the political aspirants to office in the last presidential campaign may be presumed to reflect at least some difference in general political attitude and it is interesting to in-

TABLE II  
COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF THREE MODES OF PRESENTATION

	Delivery of Speech	Tape Recording	Silent Reading
N	102	102	86
Percentage shifting in desired direction	64.7	47.1	53.5
Mean shift in desired direction	1.75	.95	1.12

TABLE III  
SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES IN PERCENTAGES AND MEANS

	PROBABILITY		
	Delivery of speech and tape recording	Delivery of speech and silent reading	Tape re- cording and silent reading
Difference in percentages of those shifting in desired direction	.01 < P < .02	.10 < P < .20	.30 < P < .50
Difference in mean amounts of shift in desired direction	P < .01	.02 < P < .05	.40 < P < .50

quire whether these differences in attitude affected response to argumentative appeal on the question of abolishing the veto in the United Nations. Table IV presents the data.

C. *Pre-stimulus opinion and amount of shift.* In Table VI the subjects are divided into three groups: those initially opposed to the conclusion supported by the argument (pre-stimulus positions

TABLE IV  
INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL ATTITUDE ON RESPONSE TO ARGUMENT

	Taft Supporters	Eisenhower Supporters	Stevenson Supporters
N	54	153	75
Percentage shifting in desired direction	48.1	56.9	58.7
Mean shift in desired direction	1.00	1.32	1.49

In this table both the mean shifts and the percentages shifting suggest that as we move from the Taft end of the continuum (if indeed it is a continuum) to the Stevenson end the amount of shift in the desired direction increases. As

6, 7, 8, and 9 on the scale), those initially undecided (position 5), and those initially favorable to the conclusion (positions 2, 3, and 4). In comparing the amount of shift experienced by the three groups, we must be content to examine

TABLE V  
SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES IN PERCENTAGES AND MEANS  
FOR TAFT AND STEVENSON SUPPORTERS

	PROBABILITY
Difference in percentages of those shifting in desired direction	$.30 < P < .50$
Difference in mean amount of shift in desired direction	$.10 < P < .20$

appears from Table V, however, this conclusion is not established at a satisfactory level of confidence. The most we can say is that probably Stevenson supporters experienced a higher mean shift in the desired direction than did Taft supporters.

the percentage in each group shifting in the desired direction; comparison of mean shifts would not be meaningful, as those favorable to the conclusion had less room on the scale in which to shift.

The difference between the first two percentages is not statistically signifi-

TABLE VI  
INFLUENCE OF PRE-STIMULUS OPINION ON AMOUNT OF SHIFT

	Initially opposed to conclusion supported by argument	Initially undecided	Initially favorable to the conclusion
N	134	77	79
Percentage shifting in desired direction	59.0	59.7	44.3

cant. The differences between each of the first two and the third approach significance ( $.05 < P < .10$ ). We conclude that probably those initially opposed to the conclusion and those undecided regarding it were more ready to shift in the desired direction than those initially favorable to the conclusion.

D. *Confidence of pre-stimulus opinion and amount of shift.* Table VII indicates the percentage shifting in the desired direction for each of the 8 pre-stimulus positions on the scale (those at position 1 again being excluded, as they could shift no farther in the desired direction).

sponse to the argumentative appeal varied conversely with the degree of confidence with which pre-stimulus opinion was held and that this was true regardless of whether the pre-stimulus opinion was favorable to or opposed to the conclusion supported by the argument.

### III. DISCUSSION

This study in general supports the conclusions already reported by Knower and Wilkie and throws some additional light on several factors conditioning response to argumentative appeal. In doing so it raises a number of questions which invite further investigation.

TABLE VII  
CONFIDENCE OF PRE-STIMULUS OPINION AND PERCENTAGE SHIFTING

	PRE-STIMULUS POSITION ON SCALE							
	Favorable to the conclusion			Undecided		Unfavorable to the conclusion		
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
N	19	32	28	77	34	42	18	40
Percentage shifting in desired direction	5.3	46.9	67.9	57.7	76.5	64.3	50.0	42.5

Among those initially favorable to the conclusion the percentage shifting is least for those at position 2 and increases as the confidence of pre-stimulus opinion decreases. The significance of the differences among these three percentages cannot be tested in a single operation, as one cell in the matrix represents less than 5 subjects. But the difference between the percentages for positions 3 and 4 approaches significance ( $.10 < P < .20$ ), and that between the percentages for 4 and for 2 and 3 combined is highly significant ( $P < .01$ ). The differences among the percentages for the four positions opposed to the conclusion is significant ( $.02 < P < .05$ ).

We may conclude with reasonable confidence that readiness to shift in re-

A somewhat closely reasoned argumentative appeal, such as was used in this study, was most effective when delivered from the platform. Would this have been even more true of an emotional appeal? Would the argument used in this study have exerted more influence if it had been several times as long? If concrete illustrations had been employed? If visual aids had been employed? If points in the argument had been arranged in some other order?

The material in Table IV suggests, without clearly demonstrating, that general political attitude conditions response to argumentative stimulation. The instrument for determining attitude was crude. Would the use of carefully constructed attitude scales throw

more light on the degree to which attitude affects response to argument? Would the use of personality inventories reveal important relationships between personality traits and response to argument?

The material in Table VI suggests, though again without clearly demonstrating, that those initially undecided or opposed to the conclusion supported respond more readily to argument than those already favorable to the conclusion. If further study should verify this conclusion, the question arises whether to influence those already in agreement a more emotional and less closely reasoned appeal is necessary. Is response to an emotional appeal, like response to the type of reasoned appeal used in this study, conditioned by the degree of confidence with which pre-stimulus opinion is held?

#### IV. SUMMARY

The 330 undergraduates in an elementary speech course, divided into fifteen sections of approximately 25 each, were exposed to a four-minute closely reasoned argument on a controversial

public question. One-third of the sections heard the argument delivered from the platform; one-third listened to it broadcast from a tape recording; one-third read the argument silently. Each subject registered his pre- and post-stimulus opinion on nine-point graphic rating scales and as a suggestion of his general political attitude indicated his personal choice among three aspirants to office in the recent presidential campaign.

All three modes of presenting the argument effected a significant shift of opinion in the desired direction, but delivery of the speech effected significantly more shift than either of the other modes. It is probable that the mean shift in the desired direction was higher for those who supported Stevenson in the last presidential campaign than for those who supported Taft. Probably those initially undecided or opposed to the conclusion supported experienced more shift in that direction than did those initially favorable to the conclusion. For all subjects, readiness to shift in the desired direction varied conversely with the degree of confidence with which pre-stimulus opinion was held.



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